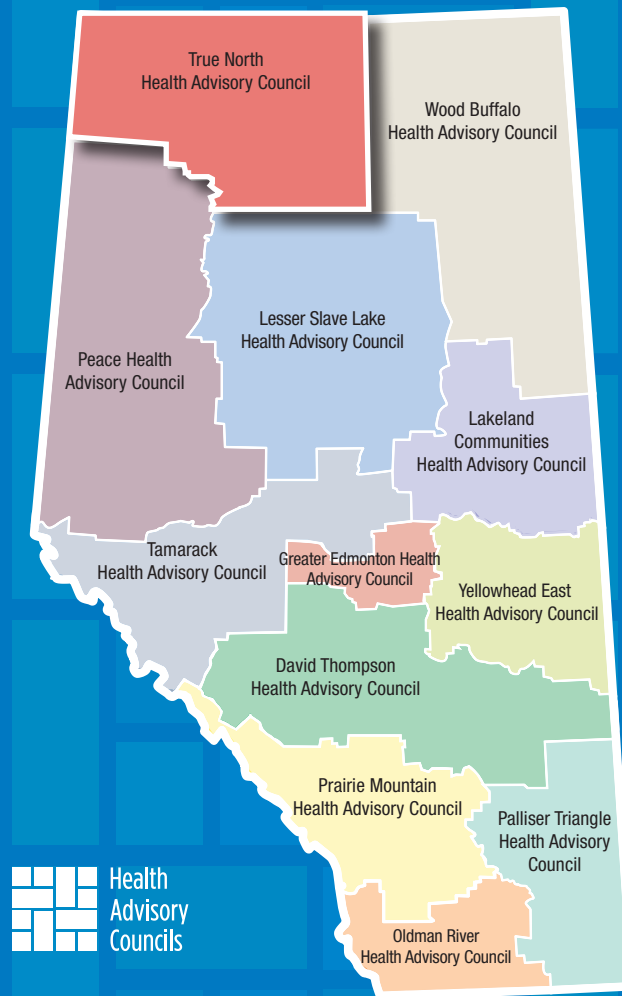


# True North Health Advisory Council



## *Annual Report 2010–2011*







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## Message from the Chair, True North Health Advisory Council

The past year has been a busy one for the True North Health Advisory Council. We accepted early that we were facing a monumental task in assisting Alberta Health Services rebuild the neglected and ailing health care system in our region.

After organizing ourselves we established a commitment to consult with the residents of our region. The Health Advisory Councils were established to liaise with Alberta Health Services and we recognized this task would be much easier with the input of our communities. The True North Health Advisory Council completed the community consultation meetings in June and immediately forwarded Alberta Health Services the most pressing, and easily resolved issues. The Alberta Health Service response resulted in a significant multi-disciplinary service increase in Paddle Prairie and the announcement of an Advanced Ambulatory Care Centre for La Crete.

In September, we developed four regional priorities: enhanced recruitment and retention, improved local training and education incentives, creation of appropriate continuing care beds, and procurement of a CT Scanner for the region. Briefing notes were created for these priorities and presented to the Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Health and Wellness, and senior Alberta Health Services staff when they toured the True North region. Our Health Advisory Council then took the setting of priorities a step further, holding a planning session and compiling a list of regional health services issues that will serve as a 'To Do List' for the upcoming year.

While the past year has been filled with learning experiences, it has also been fulfilling with the progress made. On behalf of the True North Health Advisory Council I would like to thank the staff of Alberta Health Services for their hard work and dedication to improving health care in northwest Alberta. Additionally, I would like to express a special thank you to the Alberta Health Services Community Engagement department for tireless efforts in ensuring the concerns and priorities of our region are effectively communicated to Alberta Health Services.

We look forward to the next year.

Clark K. McAskile,  
Chair, True North Health Advisory Council



## Message From the Chair, Alberta Health Services Board

Health Advisory Councils are an important link between Alberta Health Services and the people we serve. We can only be genuinely responsive to Albertans if we understand their needs and listen to their concerns, which include hearing directly from councils.

Health Advisory Councils were established to engage local community members to provide feedback on what is working well within the health care system, suggest areas for improvement, and identify local issues and concerns.

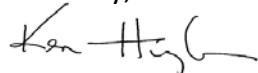
The inaugural year for Health Advisory Councils has been highly effective in establishing processes, connecting with Albertans across the province and building foundational relationships both with communities and the Alberta Health Services Board and Leadership. Continually nurturing these connections will enable councils to be better informed and work more effectively in bringing the voice of communities to improve health care across the province.

In the first year of operation, councils have contributed significantly to key Alberta Health Services strategic planning initiatives. Key consultations included the 2010-2015 Health Plan, Alberta Health Act, Accreditation Canada consultation, Provincial Menu, Community and Rural health planning initiatives and the Strategic Scenarios 2030 “Driving Forces Workshops” which centered around health planning for the next 20 years.

Building on these successes over the next year will provide a valuable mechanism for communication and information flow between communities and Alberta Health Services. The Alberta Health Services Board and Leadership are committed to ensuring that Health Advisory Councils are successful in their work now and into the future. Board members will continue to increase engagement opportunities with councils, and attend council meetings, engagement events and community consultations.

In closing, we would like to thank all council members past and present, for the time, effort and expertise they have dedicated to bringing the public perspective forward to improve health care planning across the province.

Sincerely,



Ken Hughes  
Chair, Alberta Health Services Board



# The Year In Review

## Executive Summary

*“The first focus of the Health Advisory Council was to ensure the concerns and issues of the public were heard.”*

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The True North Health Advisory Council encompasses the Mackenzie Region of northwest Alberta. This is a diverse area both culturally and economically. In addition to the main communities of High Level, La Crete, Fort Vermilion, Rainbow Lake and Zama, the region includes four First Nations and the Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement. The area is rich in oil and gas and forestry resources and contains extensive farmland. True North Health Advisory Council is also served by the Mackenzie Highway, the main route into the Northwest Territories.

The True North Health Advisory Council was well aware at its inception that there were numerous issues to be faced to bring health care in the region to an acceptable level. The first focus of the Health Advisory Council was to ensure the concerns and issues of the public were heard. Community consultations held in Fort Vermilion, High Level, La Crete, Paddle Prairie and Rainbow Lake in June of 2010, and in Zama in the autumn of 2010, were well attended and excellent feedback was received on the health issues in this region.

Following the public consultations a number of issues were forwarded to Alberta Health Services and the Health Advisory Council set the following Regional Health Service Priorities:

- enhanced Recruitment and Retention;
- improved Local Training and Education Initiatives;
- creation of Appropriate Continuing Care Beds; and
- procurement of a CT Scanner.

In October, the council met with Dr. Stephen Duckett, President and Chief Executive Officer, and other senior Alberta Health Services Staff as they toured the region. The Health Advisory Council had the opportunity to present the regional health service priorities in the form of briefing notes as well as discuss other health care issues and concerns in the region.

In October, we met with Minister Gene Zwozdesky, engaging in a similar discussion. These meetings allowed the council to bring attention to overarching health concerns in the region and have resulted in some movement towards resolving these concerns.

The True North Health Advisory Council has had the opportunity to meet with a number of senior officials in Alberta Health Services allowing a learning opportunity for both the Health Advisory Council members and Alberta Health

Services. We are now working on an action plan to address the feedback we have received from the public and the issues arising from our meetings.



## Who We Are

*“The True North Health Advisory Council was established to enhance and develop partnerships between communities and Alberta Health Services.”*

The True North Health Advisory Council was established on June 30, 2009 under section 9(4) of the Regional Health Authorities Act (1994). The True North Health Advisory Council was established to enhance engagement between communities and Alberta Health Services. *Please see Appendix 1 for the Provincial Map.*

The True North Health Advisory Council area stretches from Indian Cabins in the north to Rainbow Lake in the west, continuing eastward to Garden River, and southward to Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement. *Please see Appendix 2 for Area Map.*

The council area is a mixture of over 25 communities spread across 90,000km<sup>2</sup> of forests, fields, rivers, and lakes. Four reserves with a total of 10 First Nations communities, one Métis settlement, and a multitude of hamlets and rural communities all nestled along our rivers and lakes, and on expansive farmlands. We have a diverse population, living in long-established communities or quickly expanding rural centres. We embrace our differences as the key element feeding our prosperity.

Our members are located in various communities across our council area. As council members we aim to provide a voice to our communities and a connection to Alberta Health Services.

Current Members	
Mr. Clark McAskile (Chair)	High Level
Mr. Gord Burnell (Vice Chair)	High Level
Ms. Joy Bentley	Rainbow Lake
Mr. Tim Driedger	La Crete
Ms. Joyce Fehr	La Crete
Ms. Mary Janzen	La Crete
Mr. Eric Jorgerson	Fort Vermilion
Ms. Sandra Mann	High Level
Ms. Noreen McAteer	Fort Vermilion
Ms. Crystal McAteer	High Level
Mr. Michael Osborn	High Level
Ms. Joyce Parenteau	Paddle Prairie
Mr. Ray Toews	Fort Vermilion
Ms. Wendy Ward	Fort Vermilion
Ms. Lisa Wardley	Zama City



## What We Do

*“True North Health Advisory Council members reflect the diversity of the communities they service, have a broad interest in health issues and the health and the wellbeing of the communities they represent.”*

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The role of the True North Health Advisory Council is to:

- gather information including public input regarding health, health needs and health services for the residents of the community served by the council;
- provide advice to Alberta Health Services regarding health issues, health needs and health priorities, access to health services, the promotion of health and other matters requested by Alberta Health Services; and
- promote and participate in activities that enhance the health of residents in the communities served by the council.

True North Health Advisory Council members reflect the diversity of the communities they service, have a broad interest in health issues and the health and the wellbeing of the communities they represent.



## How We Are Accountable

Health Advisory Councils were established on June 30, 2009 under section 9(4) of the Regional Health Authorities Act (1994). The Alberta Health Services Board approved the Bylaw by which the councils were established, which were then approved by the Minister of Health and Wellness. The Alberta Health Services Board appointed 15 members to each council following a province wide recruitment drive in September 2009. Councils act as an advisory body to Alberta Health Services according to the council Charter and Bylaw. Council members are required to reside within the geographic area of the council to which they are appointed and serve terms of 2 or 3 years to a maximum of 5 years.

Councils act as an advisory body to Alberta Health Services, providing feedback from the public to support the strategic direction of Alberta Health Services. In this role, councils provide:

- provide feedback about what is working well in the health care system and areas for improvement;
- engage residents by talking to members of the community and advise of what they are saying about health services in their area;
- consider information provided by Alberta Health Services and identify issues or trends from a local perspective; and
- provide feedback to Alberta Health Services on matters pertaining to health services and service delivery on an ongoing basis;
- provide feedback to Alberta Health Services about strategies to further engage the community on health care delivery.



## What We Have Accomplished

### Engagement of the Public

All meetings of the True North Health Advisory Council are open to the public. In the first year the True North Health Advisory Council has conducted engagement events in each of the six major communities within the council area

During the inaugural year, the True North Health Advisory Council explored ways to promote awareness of the council to the public. The agendas and minutes were posted to the Alberta Health Services website. Meetings were rotated through the main communities, allowing for increased public consultation and the opportunity to tour Alberta Health Services facilities.

The True North Health Advisory Council held public consultation meetings in most of its communities in the spring of 2010 (Zama's meeting was held in the autumn of 2010). The public was invited to express their concerns regarding the current state of health care and present their vision of health care in Northwest Alberta. The public meetings were well attended. It is the councils' intention to hold these meeting annually.

*"The first meetings of the True North Health Advisory Council focused mainly on local issues."*

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A one-pager of information about the council was developed to share with the public and a banner and bookmarks were developed to provide awareness and contact information to the public for the council. A section was also developed on the Alberta Health Services website for Health Advisory Councils. Information on the Health Advisory Councils' web page include the council's name, health council area demographics, role and membership. The web page also included the date, time, location, agenda and minutes for each council meeting.

### Provide Feedback and Advice to Alberta Health Services

The issues and discussions arising for True North Health Advisory Council are quickly forwarded, through Community Engagement, to the office of the Vice President, North Zone.

Following each public consultation the items brought forward are summarized to provide a highlight of the most common issues, and those that are most important to each community. This summary along with the full meeting notes are distributed to Alberta Health Services for response.

The first meetings of the True North Health Advisory Council focused mainly on local issues. Local Alberta Health Services managers attended the meetings making presentations on their areas of responsibility and outlining their

upcoming plans. The Health Advisory Council provided feedback to be incorporated into the future programs of these local departments.

At the May council meeting in Fort Vermilion, the True North Health Advisory Council met with Lyle McKellar, Emergency Medical Services, Operations Director. Members had the opportunity for questions/answers throughout the presentation and were encouraged to provide additional input via email.

At the June council meeting, in Rainbow Lake, council received a video-conference presentation from Patricia Esau, Director, Primary Care Reform on their report entitled, *Building a Primary Care Foundation*. The Health Advisory Council passed a motion to submit three names of council members to attend the upcoming Primary Care Forum.

At the September council meeting in Paddle Prairie, the council received a presentation from Jo-Anne Dyok, Director, Rural and Community Hospitals Planning on Alberta Health Services' Community and Rural Health Planning process. Wendy Harrison, Executive Director, Seniors Health, Alberta Health Services, North Zone, was also present to provide an update on Seniors Health programs in the region. Donna Koch, Executive Director, Alberta Health Services, North Zone and Kelly Flynn, Alberta Health Services, Public Health Manager provided an update on the Paddle Prairie Health Services Plan. This plan was a direct result of the public consultation held in Paddle Prairie by the True North Health Advisory Council in June 2010.

In the November council meeting in Zama, Sandra Herritt, Director, Community and Rural Northwest, Alberta Health Services, provided responses to briefing notes previously submitted to Alberta Health Services. A recruitment and retention strategy update was provided, informing the Health Advisory Council a draft strategy had been developed by the North Zone, to address current vacancies. She noted the Rural and Community Planning Framework Update Community consultations would occur in the True North Health Advisory Council area in late November 2010. An update was also provided on the Emergency Medical Services integration for Rainbow Lake, Alberta; a program where Alberta Health Services paramedics are utilized in the health care facilities in the region.

At the March 2011 council meeting in La Crete the True North Health Advisory Council was joined by Mike Conroy, Executive Vice President, Corporate Services, Alberta Health Services and Kate Butler, Executive Director, Community and Rural Hospitals. Mike Conroy provided an overview of Alberta Health Services responsibilities and history and a detailed analysis of strategic priorities and advantages. He also provided an overview of the True North Health Advisory Council region's service developments and concerns. Kate Butler presented on a number of True North Health Advisory Council initiatives

including the La Crete Advanced Ambulatory Care Centre, which arose from the previous spring's public consultation meetings. Both Mr. Conroy and Ms. Butler remained after the meeting to participate in the public consultation meeting held after the regular HAC meeting.

## **Promote and Participate in Activities that Enhance the Health of Residents**

The Alberta Health Service response, to the 2010 public consultations, resulted in a significant multi-disciplinary service increase in Paddle Prairie and the announcement of an Advanced Ambulatory Care Centre for La Crete.

In September the True North Health Advisory Council developed four regional priorities: enhanced recruitment and retention, improved local training and education incentives, creation of appropriate continuing care beds, and procurement of a CT Scanner for the region. Briefing notes were created for these priorities and presented to Minister Zwozdesky and senior Alberta Health Services staff when they toured the area. Our Health Advisory Council then took the setting of priorities a step further, holding a planning session and compiling a list of regional health services issues that will serve as a 'To Do List' for the upcoming year.



## **What We Have Learned**

*“The first year has been a learning experience for Health Advisory Councils; we have heightened our awareness of community priorities and strengthened our connection with Alberta Health Services.”*

The first year has been a learning experience for Health Advisory Councils; we have heightened our awareness of community priorities and strengthened our connection with Alberta Health Services. The council has gained a greater understanding of our role and the processes associated with council operation.

More specifically, we have begun to realize the enormous scope and complexity of the system in place to provide health care to our residents. We also face a huge task in assisting Alberta Health Services in maintaining, enhancing and expanding the provision of health care in Northwest Alberta. Communication is a vital component of the True North Health Advisory Council's mission; not only to ensure we effectively communicate the needs of our region, but also to ensure we continue to learn and understand how health care is, and can be, delivered to the benefit of all who live in our communities.



## Looking Forward

### 2011-2012

The next year will begin again with the public engagement process. While most issues will not have changed greatly in the past year it is our responsibility to identify new issues and ensure the council's direction reflects the public's experience and concerns.

*"It is our responsibility to identify new issues and ensure the council's direction reflects the public's experience and concerns."*

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One of our first tasks will be to compile area health care concerns and needs into an Action Plan to guide us as we continue forward and to guarantee the council does not overlook a vital component in the delivery of health care to our residents. Once we have completed the Action Plan the True North Health Advisory Council will prioritize the action items and prepare briefing notes for the review and response by Alberta Health Services.

We also look forward to the timely opening of the La Crete Ambulatory Care facility, the continued expansion of health care delivery in our communities, and the placement of a CT Scanner in our region. The True North Health Advisory Council will continue to work with Alberta Health Services to address northern and rural recruitment and retention, training initiatives for local residents, and the completion of a comprehensive plan for health care programming and infrastructure in Northwest Alberta.

Our annual Work Plan will be available to view on the Alberta Health Services website [www.albertahealthservices.ca/1803.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/1803.asp)



## Contact Information 2011-2012

We welcome the opportunity to hear your voice. Please contact us at:

Clark McAskile, Chair  
Telephone: 780-926-0018  
Email: [cmcaskile@incentre.net](mailto:cmcaskile@incentre.net)

Gord Burnell, Vice Chair  
Telephone: 780-729-0854  
Email: [gord@aeromedical.ca](mailto:gord@aeromedical.ca)

Brad Cardinal, Community Engagement Officer  
Telephone: 780-643-7115  
Email: [brad.cardinal@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:brad.cardinal@albertahealthservices.ca)

Community Engagement Department:  
Telephone: 1-877-275-8830  
Fax: 403-943-1163  
Email: [community.engagement@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:community.engagement@albertahealthservices.ca)

Council Web Page:  
[www.albertahealthservices.ca/1803.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/1803.asp)

Council Email:  
[truenorth@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:truenorth@albertahealthservices.ca)

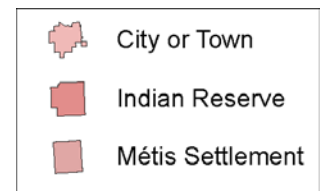
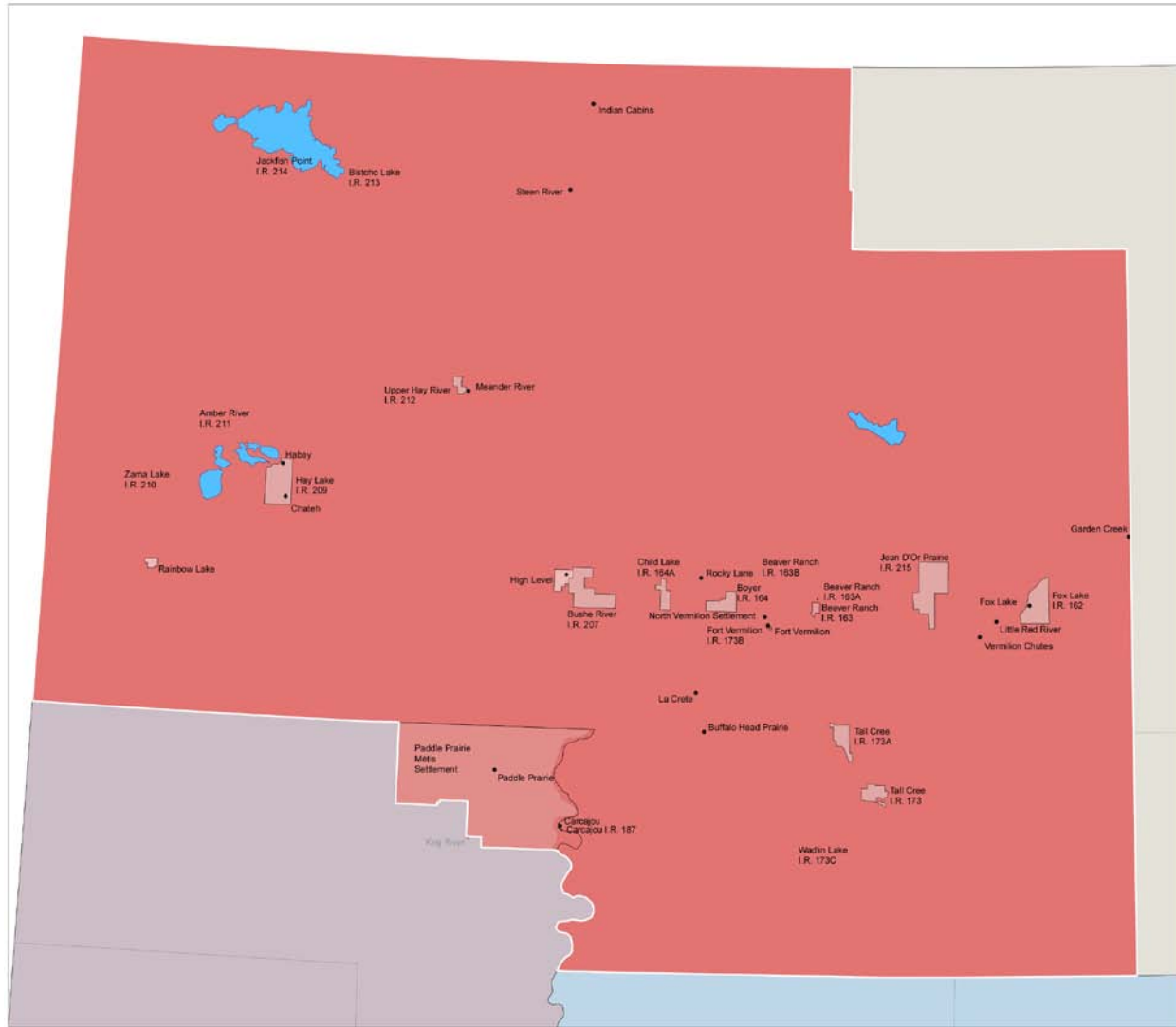
 **Appendix 1 – Provincial Map**





## Appendix 2 – Council Map

### True North Health Advisory Council Map





*Bringing the voice of  
communities to build  
a better health system*