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Third Medical Officer of Health joins AHS South Zone

Dr. Lena Derie-Gillespie will be based in Medicine Hat

SOUTH ZONE — Dr. Lena Derie-Gillespie joins Alberta Health Services' (AHS) public health team this week as the third Medical Officer of Health in AHS South Zone.

Originally from Oyen, Dr. Derie-Gillespie began her career as a medical social worker in Calgary in 2003, assisting with hospital discharge planning and financial, grief and family counselling.

In 2004, she returned to school to study law at the University of Calgary and, the following year, she transferred to the Faculty of Medicine. After completing residencies in rural family medicine in Saskatchewan and GP anesthesia in Alberta, she moved in 2011 to Pincher Creek, where she's been working as a family physician for the past four years.

She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in public health.

"Dr. Derie-Gillespie has extensive knowledge of the unique health needs experienced by southern Albertans," says Dr. Vivien Suttorp, lead Medical Officer of Health for the South Zone. "Her experience in rural medicine will be an invaluable asset to our population health and public health teams, zone leadership and provincial programs."

Dr. Derie-Gillespie, Dr. (Karin) Goodison and Dr. Suttorp will divide their responsibilities by program area across the South Zone. All three Medical Officers of Health support the entire South Zone but Dr. Derie-Gillespie will be located in Medicine Hat.

"I was drawn to public health as I believe strongly in prevention of problems before they occur," says Dr. Derie-Gillespie. "I'm excited to join Drs. Suttorp and Goodison and to share my passion for rural medicine. Growing up here, I know how important it is to ensure equal access to quality care and services no matter where you live."

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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For media inquiries, contact:

Lisa Squires

AHS Communications

403-502-8619 / 403-581-9036 (cell)

Lisa.Squires@albertahealthservices.ca