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AHS recruits six new members to Oldman River HAC

Health Advisory Councils give communities a voice in health care planning

LETHBRIDGE – Alberta Health Services (AHS) has appointed six volunteer members to its Oldman River Health Advisory Council, which provides input into health care services in the area and across the province.

The new members, who join seven incumbents on the council, were chosen as part of a larger recruitment campaign aimed at adding new voices to 12 Health Advisory Councils (HACs), two Provincial Advisory Councils (PACs) and the Indigenous Wisdom Council.

“These councils are important to the future of health care in Alberta,” says AHS Board Chair Linda Hughes. “We looked for people who are passionate about health care and eager to learn what’s working, and where improvements can be made, in how we deliver health care services in their communities. The addition of new members and renewal of experienced members will rejuvenate and refresh these councils while ensuring continuity.”

Council members represent Alberta’s Indigenous, urban, rural and remote communities, and come from all walks of life, including include teachers, seniors, community leaders and former patients. Provincial Advisory Councils also include members with personal or professional experience related to cancer care, addiction and mental health.

“AHS aims to be a person-centred health care system and, as such, we’ll continue to evolve if we listen to Albertans and understand their needs and the needs of their communities,” says Dr. Verna Yiu, President and CEO of AHS. “Their voices are crucial to helping AHS find creative solutions to address the unique health needs of communities across the province.”

The councils convene four to six times per year in communities across the province. Meetings of all councils include a mix of public members and expert resource personnel.

“We are delighted to welcome six new members to our council and look forward to the annual advisory councils’ provincial conference in October,” says Lethbridge resident Dr. Barbara Lacey, Chair of the Oldman River Health Advisory Council. “We hope to fill our remaining vacancies with members from the communities of Taber and Vauxhall, as we currently do not have representatives from the east side of our council area.”

Advisory council members engage with Albertans to understand their diverse perspectives and provide input into health care planning and decision-making. They meet with AHS zone and provincial leaders to help further AHS’ ability to provide more targeted, accessible and sustainable patient- and family-centred health care.

“As a southern Albertan and user of the health care system, I greatly value the public health care model,” says Lethbridge resident Brad Gillespie, a new recruit with the Oldman River Health Advisory Council. “Hearing from community members regarding their concerns and priorities is vital to the continuing growth and direction of Alberta Health Services, and I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing improvement of health care services in Alberta.”

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While recruitment efforts in urban and rural areas succeeded in increasing council memberships, AHS is continuing recruitment efforts until all councils reach full membership. Wildfires in northern Alberta last spring caused AHS to defer recruitment efforts for the Wood Buffalo Health Advisory Council. That work is now underway.

People interested in joining one of AHS' councils can submit an expression of interest form, which is available online at <http://www.ahs.ca/shapehealthcare>. For further inquiries, please call 1-877-275-8830, or email community.engagement@ahs.ca.

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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