

2015 -  
2016

# Wisdom Council Annual Report



Alberta Health Services

2015 - 2016



## Message from the Chair and Vice Chair of the Wisdom Council

Tansi and Oki,

We are pleased to share with you the Alberta Health Services (AHS) Wisdom Council's Annual Report for 2015-2016. In this report, we provide you with an overview of the work of the Wisdom Council, an update on our members and what we have accomplished this past year as well as a snapshot of where we are going.

During this past year the Wisdom Council moved from a four co-chair structure to a Chair/Vice Chair. We extend our deepest gratitude to the previous co-chairs: Harley Crowshoe, Gloria Laird, Robb Campre and Luci Johnson.

Gloria Laird, Harley Crowshoe and Albert Desjarlais retired from the council this year. We thank them for their dedication and commitment over the last four years. Also retiring from her role is Val Austen-Wiebe, Executive Director for the Aboriginal Health Program (AHP) at AHS. Val led the community engagement strategy to develop the Wisdom Council. We look forward to continuing our working relationship with Val and congratulate her on new role as the Executive Director for the Population Public and Aboriginal Health (PPAH) Strategic Clinical Network.

We would like to thank Vickie Kaminski for her commitment and support during her tenure as President and CEO of AHS. We appreciate the efforts of Dr. Verna Yiu, AHS President & CEO for ensuring that the business of the Council continued during the leadership change at AHS. We take this opportunity to recognize and thank the Senior Leadership at PPAH, Dr. Gerry Predy Senior Medical Officer of Health, Brenda Huband VP & CHO Central & South AB, Peter McKinnon Senior Program Officer, and Dr. Richard Musto Medical Officer of Health for taking the advice of the Council in their continuing efforts to improve the health and well-being of Indigenous people. We acknowledge the Aboriginal Health Program and its staff who provide administrative and cultural supports to the Council. To Brenda Laboucan, Engagement Officer for the Wisdom Council, we thank you for continuing to ensure that our members are engaged in a culturally respectful way. To the Council Members, we thank you for your time, knowledge and expertise through serving on this committee.

The efforts of the Wisdom Council and those who support it over the last four years have contributed to this committee being sustainable and we are honored to continue our joint efforts to improve the health and well-being of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Alberta.

In Spirit of Health and Reconciliation,

Chair, Dr. James Makokis, MD, M.H.Sc (Saddle Lake Cree Nation)

Vice Chair, Elder Casey Eagle Speaker (Sorrel Horse, Kainai Nation)





## The Wisdom Council

Established in 2001, the Wisdom Council's (WC) membership comprises a rich and diverse mixture of both non Indigenous and Indigenous traditional world views. The members also bring with them their professional, clinical and educational expertise to enable AHS, its partners and other key stakeholders to continue to identify key areas of priority for action and culturally appropriate strategies to improve the health and well-being of Indigenous people.

### Council Membership

Candidate	Zone	Comments
<b>Isabel Auger</b>	North	Isabel is a Bigstone Cree Nation member and survivor of Indian Residential Schools. Isabel has been a Cultural Advisor for over forty years to non-Aboriginal organizations, specifically at youth and adult correctional institutions. Isabel was awarded an Esquao Award from the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW) for her dedication to her people and achievement in culture.
<b>Teresa Bear Chief</b>	Calgary	Teresa is an Elder and member of the Siksika First Nation. Following more than 21 years of working with Siksika Health Services (SHS) as a leader and administrator, she now serves on the SHS Board. Since September 2010 Teresa also worked for several years in Northern Alberta for Syncrude Canada before returning to her home community at Siksika. She has been married for 48 years and has three adult grandchildren, one great grandson and a great granddaughter.
<b>Stephan Bureau</b>	Edmonton	Stephan Bureau provides an insightful youth perspective to the council. He is the youngest of three children and is from the Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation. Stephan resides in Edmonton, and has an interest and love for helping others stemming from his experiences while caring for his mother who passed away when Stephan was seven. Stephan overcame a great amount of adversity in his life as he lived through the foster care system, group homes, and ultimately independent living. Stephan is currently enrolled at MacEwan University pursuing a nursing degree. He hopes to work in hospitals and ultimately become a counsellor.
<b>Deborah Coulter</b>	Edmonton	Deborah Coulter is a proud Métis Albertan and one of three founding Directors of the newly developed "Michif Cultural Connections Company", a non-profit organization that works to preserve, promote and protect Alberta's Métis history. Operating out of the historical Juneau House in the heart of St. Albert, Alberta, the Michif Company evolved out of the former Michif Cultural and Resource Institute founded by Senator Thelma Chalifoux, who in 1997 became the first Métis woman appointed to the Senate of Canada. Now retired, Senator Chalifoux's vision of creating a safe place dedicated to preserving the history of the Métis people of Alberta is being carried forward for future generations. Deborah is



Candidate	Zone	Comments
		honoured to share her strong Métis heritage and perspectives as a member of the AHS Wisdom Council.
<b>Robb Campre</b>	Edmonton	Robb is a proud father of two boys and is a Fort McKay First Nation band member who grew up in Edmonton and Ft McMurray Alberta. Robb played junior football with the Edmonton Wildcats, University football with the U of A Golden Bears and professional football from 1985-1987 with the Edmonton Eskimos. Robb completed his Native Studies Degree Program in 1998 and then worked as a school counsellor in the Britannia and Sherbrooke Junior High schools. Following his employment as a counsellor Robb worked for the City of Edmonton in the Waste Management department as a Contract Inspector. Robb has been an active volunteer in the Aboriginal community of Edmonton Alberta for the past 30 years. Robb sits on numerous boards and committees as President or member at large as he has committed himself to the success of the Aboriginal community.
<b>Frank Daniels</b>	North	Frank is an Elder from Peepeekisiss, Saskatchewan who now lives in Smith, Alberta, with his partner Isabel Auger. Frank is a residential school survivor and served with the United States Special Forces, doing a single tour of duty in Vietnam. Frank and Isabel developed cultural programming within maximum security prisons in Alberta for Aboriginal inmates and they continue to share cultural teachings and Aboriginal values with young offenders.
<b>Paul Daniels</b>	South	Paul is an Elder (Bears paw Band), Sundance Holder, Ceremonial and Spiritual leader for the Stoney Nation. A veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces, and ordained clergy, Paul also provides cultural teachings and healing to First Nations groups Canada-wide. Paul was born in Eden Valley Indian Reserve (Longview) Turner Valley. He has a son and a daughter with 9 grandchildren. Paul currently resides in his home community of Morley First Nations where he believes there should be greater access and quality care for the Elderly with a traditional perspective in Elderly care facilities.
<b>Alma Desjarlais</b>	North	Alma is an Elder raised in Frog Lake, Alberta where her grandfather John Horse was Chief for many years. Alma had the honor of serving as a Counselor for East Prairie Métis Settlement for two different terms. She also served on the Wisdom Committee for the Alberta Mental Health Board. Alma and her husband have provided cultural supports for the Indigenous population at the Peace River Correctional Center for over 25 years. Alma currently resides in East Prairie Métis Settlement. Alma and her husband Albert have been together for over 50 years and have eight children plus an adopted child. Alma and Albert are busy grandparents with more than 32 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren.



<b>Casey Eagle Speaker</b>	South	Casey is a Blackfoot Elder and Blood Tribe member, and is the vice-chair for the council. Over the last 20 years, Casey has acted as a cultural advisor to many Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, facilitating hundreds of presentations on pathways to wellness, identity and belonging. Casey is the Indigenous Resource Coordinator at Hull Services in Calgary, where he provides cultural, spiritual and education supports to high risk youth and their families. In 2000, Casey received the Chief David Crowchild award from the City of Calgary for his hard work in cross-cultural awareness. In the same year he also received the Dr. Joseph Crowshoe award from the University of Calgary for his tireless work in Indigenous Education.
<b>Fred Eagletail</b>	Calgary	Fred is a pipe carrier and Elder Council member from the Tsuu T'ina Nation. Fred served with the United States Army in Korea and is the Carrier of the Beaver Bundle. Before retiring, Fred was an independent owner of medical transportation services which he provided for the Tsuu T'ina Nation for 10 years. He also served as a Tsuu T'ina Nation Council Member for 16 years.
<b>Ruth Gladue</b>	North	Ruth is a Western Cree Tribal Council member from Horse Lake First Nation. Ruth has served as a member on the Treaty 8 Elders Committee since 1998. Ruth graduated as Licensed Practical Nurse in 1964 and worked in various hospitals until 1980. Ruth was also the Community Health Representative for Horse Lake First Nation for a number of years.
<b>Claudine Louis</b>	Central	Claudine Louis is Plains Cree from the Samson Cree Nation. She holds a Ph.D. in Education from the Indigenous Peoples Education Program, Educational Policy Studies Department within the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. She is a mother of 5 beautiful children. Claudine's Master's degree is in Education, she also holds a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Arts degree. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow and is researching teacher identity with the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) at the University of Alberta. She is also an entrepreneur and presents on topics relevant to Indigenous peoples for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups and organizations.
<b>Dr. James Makokis</b>	Calgary	Dr. James Makokis is a Family Physician from onihhikskwapiwinihk (Saddle Lake Cree Nation) in Treaty Number Six Territory, and is the chair of the Wisdom Council. He currently practices Family Medicine in amiskwacyi-wâskahikan and teaches at Yellowhead Tribal College. Dr. Makokis believes in the importance of reestablishing nehiyaw maskihkiya (Indigenous medicines) as part of transforming Indigenous health. He is also an active member of the Edmonton Two Spirit community and is a co-founder of #2SYEG (Two Spirits of Edmonton)



<b>Dr. Lana Potts</b>	South	Sookwiipamii " Last to Come In", Dr. Lana Rose Potts BScN MD CCFP is a family physician at the Siksika Health and Wellness Centre and at Elbow River Healing Lodge. Dr. Potts is a charter class graduate of The Northern Ontario School of Medicine in Thunder Bay, Ontario and also completed a Bachelor of Science with Distinction in Nursing from the University of Alberta. Lana completed her residency training in Indigenous Family Medicine at UBC. Lana is a member of the Piikani Nation. She is married to Robert Benjoe and is the proud mother to her daughter Annataki and son Nodin.
<b>Andrea Kennedy</b>	Calgary	Andrea is an Associate Professor of Nursing at Mount Royal University (MRU) and has been a registered nurse for more than 20 years. Andrea is involved in collaborative work with the MRU Community of Practice for Indigenous Health, MRU Centre for Child Well Being, Alberta Children's Hospital, Canadian Hemophilia Society, and Bridges Social Development.
<b>Peggy Richardson</b>	Edmonton	Peggy was born in King William Island Sealing Camp, but she considers Coppermine, Nunavut home. Peggy is an Indian Residential School Survivor and is fluent in three Inuit dialects. For many years, she worked as language translator in Edmonton area hospitals. She works to preserve the Inuit Way of Life by providing traditional teachings at various education, social and health organizations. Peggy is a member of the First Nations Woman's Economic Security Council with the Alberta Government. Peggy also creates Inuit art and clothing.
<b>Wally Sinclair</b>	Edmonton	Wally was raised in Lesser Slave Lake and is a Sawridge First Nation member. During his career, Wally has worked with federal, provincial and regional governments including First Nations communities, the Métis Nation of Alberta, and the Canadian Armed Forces. Presently, he is employed at a Treatment Centre as an Executive Director. Wally also worked as a Director, Liaison and Specialist to improve cultural competency and awareness in using strategic and collaborative approaches to address past and present challenges. While working full time he completed studies at the University of Alberta. He is an active member of the Commanding Officer's Aboriginal Advisory Committee "K Division" and the Chair of the Youth Justice Committee. Wally is also a provincial and national representative member of the Friendship Centres. Wally has been awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his dedicated service to his peers. Wally is still very active in sports playing baseball for Team America at the Phoenix Arizona World Old Timers Baseball Championships.



## Wisdom Council feedback and guidance to AHS & Partners 2015-2016

The mandate of the Wisdom Council is to provide guidance and recommendations to AHS to facilitate across AHS the development and delivery of essential health services to meet the needs of the diverse Indigenous populations in Alberta. Over the past year the WC provided guidance to AHS and its partners on a number of strategies, programs, services, research and other initiatives aimed at improving the health and well-being of Indigenous people:

- **Enhancing Culturally Safe Care at AHS for FNMI people and Communities:** The WC advised Senior Leadership from PPAH that the primary issue facing FNMI people accessing AHS services are their negative experiences with the health care system. In particular racism. This has led to a mistrust of western medicine and approaches. Therefore, they recommended AHS improve culturally safe and appropriate patient centered care approaches when working with Indigenous people and communities by developing and implementing education and training opportunities for AHS staff, physicians and other service providers. More specifically, they recommended that in addition to cultural awareness and sensitivity training already available to AHS staff and physicians, that targeted training be developed to address racist and discriminatory attitudes, beliefs and behaviors towards First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and communities. The WC suggested AHS work to develop a policy and/or regulatory environments that create welcoming environment for all Indigenous people. This would also allow AHS to foster an environment for their staff and physicians to increase their capacity to respect the diversity and cultures of Indigenous people.
- **Clinical Ethical Services Strategy** – AHS Clinical Ethics Service requested guidance from the Wisdom Council on how to incorporate culturally appropriate approaches within their 5 year strategic plan. The WC recommended Cultural Helpers and Traditional Wellness staff be utilized by AHS Clinical Ethics Service as a key expert informants.
- **Aboriginal Awareness and Sensitivity Learning Strategy (AASLS)** – The AASLS within the AHP has been highly endorsed by the Council. The goal of AASLS is to increase cultural competency skills, knowledge, practices and approaches of AHS staff in health service delivery. WC members were asked to share stories regarding their experiences when accessing health services to further develop the e-learning series. The WC will continue to provide on-going input and recommendations to the Strategy.
- **United Nations Declaration on Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Canada (TRC)** - The Ministry of Indigenous Relations (Government of Alberta) coordinated a review of policies, programs and legislation based on the principles of the UNDRIP and had advised the Ministries to respond. To assist in this review AH had asked AHS to provide input based on three key themes which integrates both the UNDRIP articles and TRC recommendations. The Wisdom Council members shared the following:





### Theme 1

- **Indigenous peoples should be free and able, without discrimination, to improve their social, economic & health conditions in partnership with communities and governments.** The Wisdom Council recommended that health care systems improve transitional care; and to develop an engagement strategy with First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Alberta to improve the quality of care.

### Theme 2

- **Indigenous peoples should be free to maintain and develop their cultural heritage and incorporate into services as much as possible their Traditional Healing Practices.** The Wisdom Council recommended health care systems provide access to traditional knowledge and healing approaches to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit people when using the health care system.

### Theme 3

- **Learning of Aboriginal history, culture and health issues needs to be enhanced to improve Aboriginal cultural safety/competency in the health system and in general. In addition, Indigenous peoples should be supported to pursue careers in the health care field.** The Wisdom Council recommended health care systems increase the cultural competency of Executive Leadership, staff and physicians. Health care systems should also have a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.

A full report on information gathered from this session is available upon request (contact Brenda Laboucan).

- **Alberta Addiction and Mental Health Review (Government of Alberta)** – Dr. David Swann met with the Wisdom Council on behalf of the Government of Alberta to obtain feedback on the Alberta Mental Health Review. Recommendations from the Wisdom Council included:
  - Provide access to traditional knowledge and healing approaches to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit people when using the mental health care system
  - Explore and incorporate early intervention strategies such as recreation programming, AHS 101, use of traditional parenting programs and traditional intervention programs such as ceremonies and practices
  - Consider changing terminology to be culturally appropriate and meaningful for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people (i.e., Mental Health is not a term used in First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures)
  - Address what is not working within the current mental health system such as:
    - Lack of services
    - Barriers to accessing services
    - Challenges with navigating the mental health care system
    - Lack of culturally safe and welcoming environments
    - Lack of Indigenous representation on advisory boards/councils



- Physician prescription practices
- Continue to build upon successes such as:
  - Access to traditional knowledge and healing approaches to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit people
  - Continue to expand upon partnerships that address jurisdictional issues

## Knowledge Sharing

In addition to providing feedback and guidance, the Wisdom Council learned about many initiatives focused on improving health and health outcomes for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.

- **Aboriginal Health Program (AHP), AHS Intentional Organizational Redesign** –The AHP leadership team provided information on the changes that will be made to the organizational structure of the AHP.
- **Health Co-Management (HCOM)** – Robert Breaker, Breaker Consulting and Brent Scout Treaty 7 (on behalf of Grand Chief Charles Weaselhead) presented on the Health Co-Management. Established in 1996, Health Co-Management was formed to be a proactive mechanism to address health issues for First Nations communities in Alberta. The main goal for Co-Management is to increase the participation of First Nations in assessing, planning and managing programs and services that are funded or offered by Health Canada, First Nations Inuit Health in the Alberta Region. HCOM acts as an advocate for First Nations health interests in behalf of the Chiefs of Treaties 6, 7 & 8 HCOM is mandated by the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs and reports to all Chiefs in Alberta regularly.
- **Aboriginal Patient Charter** – Wisdom Council members Andrea Pritchard Kennedy, and Deb Coulter drafted and presented an Aboriginal Patient Charter for Indigenous people in Alberta. The Charter will be introduced for discussion with the Health Advocate’s Office in the fall of 2016.
- **Indigenous Patient Journey Project** – Addictions and Mental Health (AMH), AHS sought endorsement from the Wisdom Council to undertake work to capture Indigenous service-users perspectives on AMH services to determine what is working, what isn’t working and what is mission critical in the AMH services delivered to Indigenous people.
- **Aboriginal Cancer Care Pathways Initiative** – Alberta Cancer Prevention Legacy Fund (ACPLF) presented their work to inform the Wisdom Council on the *“Increased Access to Culturally Safe Cancer Care Pathways Experienced by Alberta First Nations in Rural, Remote and Isolated Communities”* project (First Nations Cancer Pathways Project).
- **Bias, Hostile Health Environments and the Indigenous Patient** – In this presentation, Dr. Alika Lafontaine, MOH North, AHP discussed how bias influences patient care and how personal beliefs contribute to the health outcomes of Indigenous patients.



## Work Plan

The following summarizes key areas for action of the 2014 – 2018 WC Work Plan:

### Providing guidance to increase cultural competency

- Identify social, cultural and environmental determinants of health that facilitate and support improvements in Indigenous health and how these can be addressed.
- Provide guidance on health planning, implementation and evaluation through community engagement strategies that maximize effective internal and external stakeholder relationships to increase Alberta Health Services involvement with Indigenous communities.
- Consider workforce development issues and make recommendations with respect to opportunities for Indigenous people to facilitate workforce career development and sustainability.
- Contribute to a culturally safe approach in Alberta Health Services by supporting the development of a self-identification mechanism at registration for Indigenous people accessing services – primary care, urgent care, continuing care etc.
- Advise AHS on the implementation of the Aboriginal Accreditation Standards at Indigenous Primary Care Centers.
- Provide guidance and recommendations to AHS on cultural awareness work within AHS.
- Endorse the criteria that would support the Cultural Helpers and Traditional Wellness Counselors in their work.
- Support the inclusion of traditional healing methodologies and programming within AHS

### Provide feedback and advice to AHS

- Respond to issues brought forward by AHS for input and recommendation
- Support the Aboriginal Health Program in the establishment of additional Aboriginal services

## Contact Information:

If you would like more information on the work of the 2015-2016 Wisdom Council, please contact:

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