



## Cancer Provincial Advisory Council Meeting Summary

September 19, 2020, 8:30-12:30pm | Zoom

### Introducing Your Cancer Provincial Advisory Council Members:

**In Attendance:** Dr. Margaret Churcher (Chair), Brad Gillespie (Vice Chair), Wendy Beauchesne, Varinder Bhullar, Tim Buckland, Sheena Clifford, Andrea DeYoung, Chelsea Draeger, Ernie Grach, Wendy Plandowski, Wanda Redel, Wally Sinclair, Lorri Winship

**Alberta Health Services:** Mauro Chies, Brenda Hubley, Dr. Matthew Parliament, Dr. Doug Stewart, Dr. Huiming Yang, Janine Sakatch, Laura Lee Clarke

**Regrets:** Leanne Anderson, Chelsea Draeger, Martin Dugas

### Community Input

One (1) public member in attendance.

### Call to Order

- Dr. Margaret Churcher opened the meeting with Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands.
- Welcome to the newly appointed expert member:
  - Sheena Clifford, Wellspring Calgary
- September 19, 2020 agenda was approved as circulated.
- June 13, 2020 meeting summary was accepted as circulated

### Presentations

#### The Cancer PAC – Past, Present and Future

Dr. Margaret Churcher, Chair, Cancer Provincial Advisory Council (PAC)

Highlights included:

- Provided an outline of some Cancer statistics saying overall, we are more at risk of dying from cancer than by heart, stroke, or infection combined.
- Overview of the Cancer PAC was provided which included its function, accomplishments, and current workplan initiatives.
- Dr. Churcher encouraged members to continue the connections and collaborations between Advisory Councils and the Wisdom Council so each has more familiarity with the discussions that are taking place across the province.

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## Chair's Report

The next Council of Chairs meeting is scheduled for September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## Council Member Roundtable & Good News

- Dr. Margaret Churcher sits on the Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Advisory Groups which will be meeting in December to have a focused discussion on screening for Indigenous populations.
- Varinder Bhullar thanked everyone for the amazing experience over the last 6 years. He has learned a lot and, although he may be leaving the council, he will continue with his mission of helping people as much as he can.
- To date, Varinder along with Dil-E-Punjab has provided over 21,000 meals to people in need. He has been able to help people navigate the various programs offered by the government.
- Tim Buckland thanked council members for the opportunity over the past 6 years to contribute and share his experiences.
- Wally Sinclair presented the RCMP K Division with an eagle feather that would be sworn upon for oaths and witness statements, just like a Bible.
- Wall, who has been involved in the review of documents, related a proposal for a full time Police and Crisis Team (PACT) based out of the St. Paul detachment that would serve surrounding RCMP jurisdictions. PACT is comprised of a police officer and a psychiatric nurse who typically address mental health and addiction calls for services (eg. cancer causes stress in the family and high emotions which may lead to alcohol or drug use).
- Wendy Plandowski reported that there have been social media requests for support for patients suffering through treatment and cancer. The community is trying to address some of the mental health challenges that come with a cancer diagnosis along with the rural isolation issues.
- Andrea DeYoung has joined the Cancer Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) Core Committee as a patient/family advisor.
- Andrea sits on the Stettler Hospice Society Board and they have been working on getting a hospice suite in Stettler. This is expected to officially open at Points West Stettler in late Fall.
- Brad Gillespie indicated that COVID has affected access ability in the hospital system, particularly at the Chinook Regional Hospital with one entrance open. Many appointments have moved to virtual.
- Wellspring Calgary has seen a decrease of approximately 38% in new members (patient and caregivers) from last year.
- Cancer Care Alberta and Wellspring Calgary and Edmonton recently collaborated on a Living Your Best session for people living with metastatic stage 4 incurable cancer diagnosis.
- A member shared some experiences that she and some of her family members have faced with COVID and access/navigation within the cancer program.
- A member shared her personal experience of being released from the cancer program and her feeling in a "limbo" state before being accepted back into the system. She is hoping that in sharing the gaps in care she received, it will help improve the system.

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## AHS Update

- COVID has been the main focus. AHS has been working very hard with the collection centres to increase the number of tests being done as there are currently significant delays in getting tested. Averaging around 5,000-6,000 people a day are being swabbed over the last 10-12 days with testing being as high as 18,000/day. Will be working to acquire some new equipment that will help with some of the testing throughput. AHS is also looking at changing the testing patterns for asymptomatic patients.

## AHS Cancer Care Alberta (CCA) Update

- On September 10<sup>th</sup>, the cancer program changed its name from CancerControl Alberta to Cancer Care Alberta. This change builds on conversations and consultations that began in early 2019, to explore whether CancerControl Alberta accurately expressed who the program was. From these conversations, it was perceived the term “control” had a negative connotation, sounded bureaucratic and didn’t reflect the care provided.
- A Memo of Understanding has been established with the University of Calgary, Cummings School of Medicine and AHS Cancer Care Alberta that commits to working collaboratively to support cancer care, research, innovation, and education.
- AB Health along with the Alberta Cancer Foundation recently announced funding support of \$15M for the provincial cellular therapy program for Alberta. This is a new treatment for a specific type of relapsed lymphoma and leukemia. Alberta will be the third province in Canada (first in Western Canada) to offer this therapy.
- The cancer centres are working very hard in keeping patients and staff safe. Screening has been paramount at all the centres.
- Operational planning has started for both the Calgary Cancer Centre and the Grande Prairie Cancer Centre.

## AHS Cancer Screening Update

- COVID has had a huge impact overall on cancer screening in Alberta and across Canada.
- A funding proposal is being submitted to the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer to support accelerated adaption and innovation for screening with two themes: a) colorectal screening and b) virtual allocation of care for post cervical and colorectal screening.
- A second community gathering will be held in Calgary on Sept 28<sup>th</sup> with elders/leaders to share the preliminary findings and discuss potential recommendations and plans to improve screening and outcomes for First Nations people.
- A business case has been developed and consultation will begin regarding potential expansion of lung cancer screening in Alberta.

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## AHS Cancer Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) Update

- The Transformational 2020-2024 Roadmap will help guide the Cancer SCN activity. There are three strategic directions: a) to build a community to strategically transform cancer care, b) to use data, and evidence to inform priorities, practice, policy, & planning, and c) enhance experiences for patients & families, outcomes & efficiencies. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/about/scn/ahs-scn-cancer-transformational-roadmap-2020-2024.pdf>
- The SCN has received a mandate and support through the Innovation spread and scale grant jointly funded by Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services to design and implement provincial cancer diagnosis pathways for colorectal cancer and lymphoma. The Cancer SCN is completing an inventory of cancer diagnosis pathways across all tumour types in Alberta. This inventory will highlight cancer diagnosis pathways that should be prioritized for implementation.
- From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of Albertans diagnosed with cancer has decreased by 23% over Mar-Sep 2020 as compared to the same period in 2019. Recommendations for proposed actions are being developed which include the facilitation of a public health campaign.

## AHS Community Engagement Update

- Over 100 virtual engagement sessions have been held since the pandemic began.
- Engagement tools such as Better Impact, Together4Health and a public e-newsletter have been launched.
- Implementation of HAC2.0 is underway with the shift in the meeting cycle to include two engagement events which began in September. Work is currently underway on the terms of reference, bylaws, work plans, recruitment, onboarding, orientation, and succession planning.
- The Annual Advisory Council Forum has been moved from October to June, 2022. A call requesting volunteers to sit on the 2021 Forum working group will be sent out shortly.
- As part of the Spring Forum, we will be looking at a way to do some focused work on the Advisory Councils' work plans/commitments and will have the opportunity to share and learn from others.

## Council Business

- Recruitment activities underway include:
  - Interviews with four potential public members will be taking place shortly. This is to fill the vacant positions in the Edmonton and South Zones.
  - Recommendation of appointment for one public member from the Edmonton Zone has been sent to the Board for approval.
  - Wendy Beauchesne has been put forward for Board approval representing the Alberta Cancer Foundation on the Council.
  - Martin Dugas is no longer with Wellspring Edmonton. Will be in contact with Wellspring regarding a replacement.
  - Chelsea Draeger's second term (3 years) has been approved by the Board effective October 1<sup>st</sup>.

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- Discussion took place regarding the frequency, format (in person, Zoom), and timing of Cancer PAC 2021 meetings.
- Wendy Plandowski was the only self-nomination for Vice-Chair. All members in attendance were in favor of appointing Wendy as the Vice Chair.
- Brenda Hubley provided a presentation on Cancer Care Alberta's COVID response to Virtual Care. Highlights include:
  - Fairly aggressive and rapid response took place in transitioning from in person to virtual care appointments.
  - Prior to COVID, nearly 100% of care was delivered in person. From April 1-June 10, 2020, 52% of patients had at least one virtual appointment across 17 cancer centres.
  - Approximately 400 randomly selected patients agreed to provide feedback on their virtual telephone care. Majority of patients were satisfied with their experience but there were three particular areas where patients did report a lower satisfaction rate in their care within the virtual environment: a) discussion of emotional worries and concerns, b) friend and family involvement, and c) resource and referral connection.
  - Staff and physicians were also surveyed and believed that virtual care increases access and provides convenience for cancer patients and their families. 77% of staff supported providing virtual care in the future.
  - What has been learned through the high level and preliminary information is that virtual care is here to stay, development of robust virtual workflows need to take place, and the virtual care skills of the staff and physicians need to be enhanced.
  - A Steering Committee will be established that will oversee the development of a CCA Virtual Care Framework and the development of a coordinated coherent operational plan for the implementation and ongoing evaluation for cancer's critical care strategy. CCA is looking to have two members participate in this initiative.
- Discussion took place on taking action rather than strategizing as it refers to in the Cancer PAC Workplan 2021/22. Focused work for all Advisory Councils is expected to take place in spring 2021. In the meantime, the members agreed that some discussions should start to take place in early 2021 so that everyone understands the importance of this work.
- On behalf of AHS and the cancer program, Brenda Hubley thanked Dr. Churcher, Tim Buckland, and Varinder Bhullar for their extensive commitment to the Cancer PAC.

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### **Actions/Next Steps:**

- A survey will be sent to the members with regards to the frequency, day, and time of the 2021 meetings. Previous meetings typically were held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of March, June, September, and December.
- Virtual Care Project Charter and CCA COVID Virtual Care presentation to be distributed to members for review. Looking for two members to volunteer and participate in this initiative.
- Time to be set aside at the early 2021 Cancer PAC meeting to discuss objectives and actions for the 2021/22 workplan/commitment.

Anyone interested in applying to the Cancer Provincial Advisory Council can do so through the [AHS website](#).

Learn about the organizational goals of AHS in the [2017-2020  
AHS Health Plan and Business Plan](#).

Join us in changing the conversation from [illness to wellness](#).

Contact us at: [pac.cancer@ahs.ca](mailto:pac.cancer@ahs.ca) or call: 1-877-275-8830