



## Cancer Provincial Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2021 | 8:30am – 12:30pm | Zoom

ATTENDEES & INTRODUCTIONS	
<b>Members</b>	Brad Gillespie (Chair), Wendy Plandowski (Vice-Chair), Leanne Anderson, Mark Armstrong, Wendy Beauchesne, Jill Bernhart, Sheena Clifford, Andrea DeYoung, Ernie Grach, Diane Huband, Marilyn Hundleby, Wanda Redel, Wally Sinclair, Melissa Smith, Lorri Winship
<b>AHS</b>	Brenda Hubley, Mark Joffe, Barb O’Neill, Matthew Parliament, Janine Sakatch, Monica Schwann, Douglas Stewart, Huiming Yang, Laura Lee Clarke
<b>Regrets</b>	Courtney Kerrigan
<b>Public</b>	Zero
<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>	Brad opened the meeting with Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands. Brad welcomed all in attendance and went through introductions.
<b>Approval of previous minutes</b>	December 12, 2020 minutes were reviewed and approved by consensus.
STANDING ITEMS	
<b>Action items from previous meeting</b>	Action items from the December 12, 2020 meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2021-22 Cancer PAC meeting dates will be sent to members for review. <b>COMPLETE</b></li> <li>A session will be incorporated into the March meeting to develop the 2021-24 priorities/commitment statement. <b>COMPLETE.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Alberta Health Services Updates</b>	<b>Mark Joffe, Vice President &amp; Medical Director, Cancer Care Alberta, Clinical Support Services &amp; Provincial Clinical Excellence</b> , shared the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alberta Health announced yesterday additional funding to increase access and the number of surgical procedures across the province. This will ensure that all Albertans requiring surgery will receive it within the clinically appropriately time frame.</li> <li>AHS continues to work on the initiatives and recommendations from the AHS Review.</li> </ul>



- Yesterday was the one-year anniversary of the first Alberta diagnosed with COVID-19. AHS is incredibly grateful to our health care workers who have shown tremendous resilience this past year. AHS is now looking at the long-term impact COVID-19 is going to have on Albertans such as mental health and delayed diagnosis of chronic illnesses.
- Alberta Health announced that there is a third vaccine product available. Covishield/Astra Zeneca will start to be offered for certain age groups. Eligible individuals who choose to not get the Covishield vaccine will have the option to wait to receive the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine when Phase 2D begins. Further details on the immunization plan for those with chronic illness will be available soon. The province will be extending the time period between first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccine to 16-weeks. Patients who are or have recently had cancer treatment, should discuss the vaccine options with their oncologist/physician. Further information on vaccine safety can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine.aspx#safety>

**Monica Schwann, Director, Screening Programs**, shared the following:

- Planning has started that will help facilitate easier access to colorectal cancer screening (FIT test) by enabling Albertans to also order a kit via a toll free phone line. This is a great opportunity to address some of the geographical challenges with people having to travel long distances to obtain a FIT kit through their primary care provider.
- The Creating Health Equity in Cancer Screening initiative has been engaging community members and health care workers in NE Calgary to develop awareness strategies targeting urban individuals that are not accessing cancer screening.
- The Integrated Access Cancer Screening project is designed at improving access to screening in northern Alberta Communities, where cancer screening rates are lower than the provincial average. In conjunction with the screen test mobile, a nurse practitioner provides cervical cancer and colorectal screening. The first clinic took place in December in Slave Lake and 30 patients were seen. Since this time, clinics have taken place in Bonnyville, Cold Lake with plans to visit St. Paul, Elk Point, Boyle, Peace River, Grimshaw, and Westlock.
- The program continues to monitor cancer screening participation and follow up. COVID has affected cancer screening the past year with overall volumes in Alberta having decreased slightly. Strategies are being looked at to catch up from service suspensions that took place last year.
- Continuously looking at different ways of bringing screening services closer to home and into the more remote communities in Northern Alberta.



**Brenda Hubley, Chief Program Officer, Cancer Care Alberta and Matthew Parliament, Senior Medical Director, Cancer Care Alberta**, provided the following operational update:

- The cellular therapy program in Alberta began accepting referrals in January 2021 with the first patient scheduled to receive commercial cell therapy at the end of March in Calgary. It is expected the first patient to be accepted in the “made in Alberta” clinical trial will be the beginning of April. Over the next several months, the program will be evaluating clinical outcomes, tracking costs and reviewing processes that will help to inform the cellular therapy program going forward.
- The Ambulatory Oncology Patient Satisfaction Survey (AOPSS) is conducted every two years to help Cancer Care Alberta (CCA) better understand how cancer patients perceive the quality of cancer care delivered in Alberta. In mid-February, patients currently receiving treatment or who have been treated in the last six months may be invited to share their experiences by completing this nationally standardized and validated questionnaire. Survey results will be presented to the Cancer PAC in the latter part of 2021.
- Work has been underway with patient advisors and staff to ensure CCA’s Patient Reported Outcome (PRO) tool is optimized for electronic completion in MyAHS Connect. Over 30 patient advisors and 100 front line staff have been involved in the redesign process.
- CCA is aligning its virtual care delivery with the recently released AHS Virtual Care Strategy. This strategy will aim to achieve improved outcomes, improved patient experience, improved staff experience, and cost effectiveness. A patient advisor consultant group is being established to enable collaboration with the project team.
- The Alberta’s Tomorrow Project (ATP) Antibody Testing (CAT) Study is helping public health decision makers to estimate the proportion of people in Alberta who are immune to COVID-19. Immunity is assessed by measuring COVID-19 antibodies in blood samples. In the CAT study, ATP is collecting information from participants about themselves and their lives to understand what influences COVID-19 infection and immunity. With the permission of participants, ATP is linking that information with other information held in the health system to help learn more about the short, medium and long term impacts of COVID on overall health.
- The Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) program is actively working on streamlining the processes for AYA assessment and distress screening as well as an onco-fertility pathway.
- Supportive Care, CCA has prioritized a ‘return to work’ initiative, with the goal of enabling cancer patients’ re-entry to productive roles. One of the tasks is collaborating with Wellspring Calgary to offer 6 week Return to Work Education class for patients accessible virtually anywhere in the province.



- Work on the CCA/Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC) project, ‘Walking Together: Strengthening First Nations, Métis and Inuit Cancer Care in Alberta’, has seen some successes both in community relations and in increasing the capacity of CCA to provide culturally appropriate care to those who come to our cancer centres. There has been progress with virtual meetings in Maskwacis, Stoney-Nakoda and the Sagitawa Friendship Centre in Peace River. There have now been opportunities to virtually hear the stories of those living with cancer from one of these communities. The pandemic response has made it difficult to engage fully with other communities due to their capacity to undertake the discussions. Work is ongoing to enhance the capacity of CCA to provide culturally appropriate care. There are now Indigenous Cancer Patient Navigators north and south, interdisciplinary Indigenous cancer patient rounds in Calgary, a process to facilitate smudging at the Cross Cancer Institute, with plans to enhance that to be inclusive of ceremony and expand it to other sites, and an ongoing lunch and learn series for CCA staff.
- The Calgary Cancer Centre continues to progress on time. Work continues inside the facility including installation of carpet tiles, reception desks, and interior painting on lower levels. Operational readiness planning is underway with various groups including operational leaders, staff, physicians and patient & family advisors.

**Douglas Stewart, Senior Medical Director, Cancer Strategic Clinical Network and Barb O’Neill, Senior Program Director, Cancer Strategic Clinical Network**, provided the following update:

- Since the onset of COVID-19, the number of Albertans diagnosed with cancer has decreased by 20 per cent across all geographies and age groups compared to the same period in 2019. A [public awareness campaign](#) has been launched that emphasizes cancer remains a serious health issue & the number one cause of mortality; educates Albertans on signs & symptoms suggestive of cancer that should prompt medical attention by their family physician; and reassures Albertans that healthcare facilities and Primary Care Clinics are safe places if care is needed. The public campaign went live in January beginning with social media, radio and TV ads. Posters have also been developed and distributed to healthcare providers throughout the province. Both TV and radio interviews have also been done.
- The Alberta Cancer 2030 Plan “Changing our Future: Alberta Cancer Plan to 2020: was published in 2013 and set out 10 strategies for change. This is a foundational document to stimulate and support discussions about future areas of focus for cancer in Alberta and for the health system. The Future of Cancer Impacts in Alberta Working Group will be established to collate and synthesize what is currently known about cancer in Alberta as well as complete projections of future incidence, mortality, and survival. This group will identify priorities across the cancer continuum for improvements in the health system, ensuring greater values and outcomes for Albertans.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some funding has been secured to continue with the Alberta Cancer Diagnosis pathway, which will include a design for an overarching comprehensive diagnosis program for the Province. Implementation planning for the lymphoma cancer diagnosis pathway is underway with Lab, DI, and lymphoma teams in Central and South regional cancer centres. Planning for colorectal cancer diagnosis pathway in Edmonton and Calgary zones has been initiated.</li> </ul> <p><b>Janine Sakatch, Director, Community Engagement</b>, provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Spring Forum will be held virtually June 9-12 with the theme being 'Hope and Resilience'. The Forum will begin with an opening plenary session with David Weyant, Chair, AHS Board and Dr. Verna Yiu. There will be evening session hosted by the Wisdom Council, some guest speakers as well as some social activities. Sessions will be planned throughout each of the 4 days (combination of early morning/afternoon and late afternoon/evening). The agenda and registration details will be distributed in April/May.</li> <li>Recommendations from the HAC Review are being applied to the Expression of Interest Form, member orientation, and the template for meeting minutes.</li> <li>Community Engagement will be working on a post COVID strategy (hybrid model) to maintain the ability for advisory council members to join other council meetings and events but also bringing people back together in person.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Council Round Table</b></p>	<p>The following was shared by Council members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was suggested that the Cancer PAC invite Drs. Jasneet Parmar, Medical Lead, AHS Edmonton Zone Homecare &amp; Transitions and Sharon Anderson Research Coordinator to attend a future meeting and present on "Supporting Alberta Family Caregivers" from a cancer perspective.</li> <li>Health Advisory Councils have been very active and had success with Community Connections. It was suggested that the Cancer PAC review how these are being done and perhaps look at hosting a couple events.</li> <li>Members have noticed that there is optimism within their communities regarding the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.</li> <li>A hospice room in the Stettler long-term care centre was opened in the fall.</li> <li>A few members have been hearing that people in their communities had a delayed cancer diagnosis due to postponed visits to their family physicians. It is important to spread the message that if people have signs and symptoms to seek timely medical attention. Seeking advice and care from your family doctor or nurse practitioner is important for all aspects of your health, particularly for potentially life-threatening diseases that can be avoided by early diagnosis such as cancer.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellspring Calgary has recently been invited to be a community collaborator for a virtual Collective Wellness Pow Wow for all Nations on March 20<sup>th</sup> hosted by Bow Valley College and Tsuu T’ina Police. <a href="https://collectivewellnesspowwow.ca/">https://collectivewellnesspowwow.ca/</a></li> <li>• At the request of AB Health, the Prevention program in AHS is working on a proposal related to the enforcement of tobacco vaping with an anticipated go forward date of April. Alberta is one of the last provinces to have an enforcement group on tobacco vaping.</li> <li>• As part of the Wisdom Council’s three-year commitment, they are working to ensure that the indigenous perspective is included in various initiatives and committees.</li> </ul>
<b>Action Item(s) from Standing Items</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laura Lee will further explore having Drs. Jasneet Parmar and Sharon Anderson attend a future meeting and present on “Supporting Alberta Family Caregivers” from a cancer perspective.</li> <li>• Brad, Wendy P., and Laura Lee will discuss the potential of hosting a Community Connection event.</li> </ul>
<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	
<b>Presentation(s)</b>	No presentations took place at this meeting.
<b>Commitment/Priorities Planning Session</b>	A planning session took place to establish a set of commitment statements that the Cancer PAC can focus on for three years.
<b>Action Item(s) from New Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small working group will meet in the next few weeks to complete the draft Commitment/Priorities Statements document. This document will then be circulated to all members for review and input prior to approval at the next meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	Date: Saturday, June 5, 2021 Time: 8:30am – 12:00pm Location: Zoom

Our meetings are open to the public. Dates and locations are [available here](#).  
 Visit [Together 4 Health](#) (T4H) to engage with AHS online.