



## **Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) Provincial Advisory Council (PAC) Meeting Summary** May 9, 2020 Online via Zoom

### **Introducing your SOGIE PAC members:**

**In attendance:** Jennifer Kneller (Chair), Rebecca Alley (Vice Chair), B Adair, J. Anderson, Kenyo Arujo, Jason Beck, Renate Braul, Rachel Braeuer, Carla Grant, Jane Oxenbury, Jolene Wright, S. Stewart, Dr. Kristopher Wells

**Alberta Health Services:** Dr. Ted Braun, Heather Cobb, Shahnaz Davachi, Lana Dunn, Andrea Jackson, Diane McNeil, Terri Miller, Marni Panas, Bryan Peffers, Janine Sakatch, Tammy Troute-Wood

**Regrets:** Stephanie Booth, Murray Crawford

### **AHS Presentations**

#### **Connect Care Update**

**Marni Panas, Program Manager, Diversity and Inclusion, AHS**

Highlights include:

- Frontline was gathered from staff at the Gender Clinic, Endocrinology Clinic, the Stollery Children's Hospital, SOGIE PAC members and more
- The governance committee approved the recommendation to ensure 'affirmed names' are used first when health professionals input into chart smart tools, with legal names used only when necessary
- The same approval applies to the outpatient scheduler in ambulatory clinics, ensuring the correct name is used when addressing patients
- Lab requisitions also now include affirmed name and gender identity as first options with legal name and other gender-related information secondary
- Under gender identity in the category list, 'gender fluid' and 'non-binary' are now included; under organ inventory 'fallopian tubes' is added, as is 'bilateral vs. unilateral'
- Training resource is about to be finalized – called GEN120 in eLearning, for all super-users. The focus is on the LGBTQ2S+ experience in healthcare and why it's important
- Working on adding pronouns to the patient storyboard
- Data continues to come in and will allow for increasing inclusivity
- Marginalized pops are most profoundly impacted by a crisis such as a pandemic as is recovery

#### **Future Engagement for SOGIE PAC**

**Janine Sakatch, Executive Director, Community & External Relations, AHS**

Highlights include:

- AHS has conducted 260+ engagement sessions over Zoom over the last eight weeks, during the COVID-19 pandemic, successfully connecting with thousands of Albertans



- Based on the work plan, goals of engagement will be to raise awareness of the PAC. It's recommended to conduct a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) within communities; identify future engagement opportunities
- Group discussion to narrow focus:
  - Thoughts on virtual engagement; pros/cons; what would make it better
  - Who and where to engage, and why?
  - Communities to engage

#### Actions/next steps:

- Feedback was collected and will be used to drive future engagement with the PAC
- Identify a couple of opportunities in the next few months, prior to next meeting – safe for membership, safe for AHS and safe for the group we engage
- Compile feedback to share with the engagement and partnerships working group. Discuss then come to larger group with recommendations for next steps

#### **Mental Health COVID-19 Planning**

**Diane McNeil - Director, Promotion, Prevention & Community Initiatives, AHS**

**Debbie Gray – Manager, Mental Health Screening & Early ID, AHS**

#### Highlights include:

- Measures are required to address social factors such as job loss, loneliness, isolation, etc., as ways of preventing addiction and mental health in the future
- Work is underway to support the psychosocial needs of Albertans
- Psychosocial supports are often needed up to five years after a disaster while resilience is building
- Disasters compounded with economic challenges make recovery more complex
- A pandemic has unique challenges as it is not one event, rather, it covers many months and is predicted to have multiple waves, further complicating things
- Stepped care approach focuses on supports for the whole population at the community level
- Supports currently available can be found on the AHS [Help in Tough Times](#) website
- The disaster psychosocial approach focuses on the human side of the experience and building capacity of natural supports. Lots of focus on community-based services
- COVID-19 is a health disaster that also deeply impacts us socially as physical distancing is required
- Important to recognize the reaction to a disaster can be significant but not necessarily clinical in nature
- Training available includes Psychological First Aid (PFA), Skills for Psychological Recovery, HeartMath
- Key resources: 211, 811, AHS Addiction & Mental Health Help Line, AHS Help in Tough Times (211 and Help in Tough Times have dedicated resources for LGBTQ2S+ people)



### Questions and comments from Council:

**Q.** Is PFA training available to everyone and what is the criteria?

**A.** For those internal to AHS it's on MyLearningLink. Externally, it will be launched on Zoom. It's a 6-hour course that's been condensed to a 2-hour virtual course. Looking at offering a generic course as well as a train-the-trainer course. They can also provide a closed-PFA training session for up to 25 people.

### Actions/next steps:

- Andrea to enquire about psychological first aid for PAC members.

### **Sexual and Reproductive Health presentation**

Heather Cobb - Sexual Health Promotion Specialist, AHS

Tammy Troute-Wood - Sexual and Reproductive Health Specialist, AHS

### Highlights include:

- Importance of acknowledging we are all sexual beings regardless of sex assigned at birth
- AHS services differ in each Zone but all are under the purview of public health
- AHS is mandated to increase access to contraception and to reduce sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates. Sexual and Reproductive (SRH) clinics across Alberta offer no-cost contraception for those who cannot afford it
- Information on services available in each Zone is at [ahs.ca/srh](https://ahs.ca/srh).
- There are limitations in service delivery, especially for rural and remote communities
- Youth/young adults can access services without identification or an Alberta Health Card
- Since the COVID-19 pandemic data on testing has not been collected due to redeployment of staff. STI clinics are still operating in Edmonton and Calgary. In rural communities it is only done if physician are testing
- Abortion services are deemed essential, information on access is online at [ahs.ca/abortion](https://ahs.ca/abortion)
- It is advised people reach out to their health care provider directly if/when they have feedback. Alternately, to contact AHS' [Patient Relations](#).

### Actions/next steps:

- Invite Patient Relations to present on providing feedback to AHS on sexual health services.

## **Working Group Updates**

As a part of Council's strategy to address the priorities in its work plan, members have formed three working groups/sub-committees to create space for focused efforts on specific priorities. Each working group



provides an update of the work done to-date and upcoming priorities to discuss and validate with the whole Council. Work has been paused during the COVID-19 pandemic and will resume when appropriate to do so.

## Council Member Roundtable

Council members and AHS representatives shared updates and information on work underway related to improving the healthcare experience of LGBTQ2S+ Albertans. Some of the highlights from the discussion are included below:

- The Diversity & Inclusion Workforce Group has representation from across Alberta. It's compiled results from its census and will prioritize work in June.
- AHS' HR information system now allows employees to self-identify.
- The College of Alberta Psychologists has been holding town hall meetings about COVID-19; lots of discussion about consent for treatment.
- Calgary City Council meets May 13 to hear from those for and against the adoption of the ban on conversion therapy. The time to include your voice to this discussion is now.
- The Alberta Trans Health Network and the gender clinic and Edmonton Mental Health Trans Wellness initiative to create a website to service as a hub for trans information. It will provide general information and easy access to inclusive services.
- Results of the [Being Safe, Being Me 2019: Canadian Trans and Non-binary Youth Health Survey](#), has been published. The next phase of research will be to gather stories and experiences of 20-30 youth across Alberta. Statistics are also found [online](#).
- A trans reproductive health study to provide input to the [Canadian Transgender Reproductive Health: Birth Control and Pregnancy Health Experiences](#), is also available online.
- Feedback from a Trans Health presentation to U of A pharmacy students indicated frustration with Alberta-specific medical guidelines for health care professionals.
- Delays in surgery for LGBTQ2S+ people has a residual impact.
- The Government of Alberta has made \$53M available for mental health supports as a result of the pandemic. \$25M is set aside for community grants, open to the public, and is divided in three phases. More information is available [here](#).
- AHS is working hard to prepare for capacity in critical care during the pandemic. It's seeing people present with health problems later than usual due to uncertainties related to COVID-19.
- Surgeries have begun again; balance is required to address healthcare needs, fight and prevent spread of the virus.
- Chairs at the Council of Chairs provided input to visitor guidelines for long-term care supportive living, primary care and end-of-life care. They also provided input to a triage disaster protocol that addresses surge capacity of critical care beds in Alberta.

Learn about the four 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: [SOGIE.PAC@ahs.ca](mailto:SOGIE.PAC@ahs.ca)  
Call: 1-877-275-8830.