



Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression (SOGIE) Provincial Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2021/Zoom

ATTENDEES & INTRODUCTIONS	
Members	Jennifer Kneller (Chair), Rebecca Alley (Vice Chair), B Adair, J. Anderson, Jason Beck, Stephanie Booth, Renate Braul, Carla Grant, Jane Oxenbury, S. Stewart, Dr. Kristopher Wells
AHS	Dr. Ted Braun, Heather Cobb, Shahnaz Davachi, Andrea Jackson, Diane McNeil, Marni Panas, Bryan Peffers, Janine Sakatch
Regrets	Kenyo Arujo, Murray Crawford, Lori Roe, Shawn Singer, Jolene Wright
Welcome & Introductions	Jenn welcomed all in attendance and went through introductions. Jenn provided a land acknowledgment.
Approval of previous minutes	February 6, 2021 minutes were reviewed and approved by consensus.
STANDING ITEMS	
Action items from previous meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Council work commitments – in progress. Provide recording of engagement discussion – completed via written documentation due to audio file too large to email.
Alberta Health Services Update	<p>AHS Permanent Resources shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foothills Hospital has a new Diversity and Inclusion Committee with 15 members. It's a grassroots group that will look at resources AHS already has, and ways to make improvements. An AHS public awareness campaign reminds Albertans to seek medical attention if needed. Don't let the pandemic stop you. Primary Care has initiated a communicative practice group for diversity and inclusion to create a psychologically safe space for team members to come and talk about equity. AHS disaster-related presentations have had big uptake since going online; demand is increasing. There is also a disaster psychosocial newsletter and a toolkit for social isolation and loneliness. Sexual Reproductive Health Clinics are open; spread the word! They begin with phone interviews but can do in-person. Updates to the AHS LGBTQ2S+ website are in the works, one step at a time.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional gender markers will be available in June to AHS' workforce upon onboarding. This following recommendations to AHS insurance companies who have accepted and made the appropriate changes. • Some people have gone for COVID-19 immunization and been dead-named. Email SOGIE.PAC@ahs.ca with information on how one registerd, the site registered at, the clinic, etc. AHS will find where the problem is in the system. • AHS celebrates Pride in June with multiple virtual events, culminating in the Pride Drive in Edmonton on June 9. Calgary's drive will occur in September. • Anti-racism work continues with 36 recommendations to go to AHS Executive Leaders in June. • The Advisory Council Forum will be held virtually, June 9-12. Invitations have gone out; please attend all that you can. <p>Dr. Ted Braun, Vice President & Medical Director-Clinical Operations, AHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Meta Clinic is doing some process improvement work to address wait times. May have updates in fall/winter. • Follow up after gender affirming surgery needs to occur in a clinic setting, not in a physician's private office, because other disciplines are required to provide wraparound care. • AHS takes direction from Alberta Health re: provision of gender affirming surgery in Alberta. AHS cannot undertake new procedures without the Minister of Health's approval.
<p>Council Round Table</p>	<p>Council members provided the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rural Municipality of Wood Buffalo continues work to establish a diversity and inclusion committee. • Scott presented to Capital Care Recreation Therapists on working with LGBTQ2S+ clients in Continuing Care. • Work continues in Covenant Health to move diversity and inclusion forward, specific to LGBTQ2S+ clients, patients and families; including work with the Council of Bishops. • Several members are involved with or have presented to groups such as Victim Services, Municipalities, Calgary Police Service Advisory Board, Edmonton Men's Health Clinic and the Canadian Association of Pharmacists, on diversity and inclusion in their organizations. • B has been appointed Co-Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA). • Conversion Therapy Bylaws continue to be introduced in cities across Canada. Strathmore is moving forward and Fort Saskatchewan is next. While opposition groups remain the momentum for Bylaws has been great.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender markers at pharmacies don't match NetCare or the card needed to bill private insurance plans. There's concern about privacy implications when people are outed at the counter. Carla is connecting with the Alberta College of Pharmacists to seek guidance for pharmacists re: trans care. • A Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) is being established at Norquest College, one for teachers and one for students. • Jane is meeting with the Child Advocacy Centre to advise about gender diverse and gender non-conforming children. • The Calgary Queer Arts Society is creating an outreach program for seniors. • Jenn and Rebecca attended a meeting with Council Chairs and Health Minister Shandro. • The Sustainability Council ensures all communities are represented as recommendations in the AHS Review are addressed.
NEW BUSINESS	
Presentation	<p>Trans Wellness Initiative (TWI) <i>Spencer Belanger, Prairies Regional Manager, Community-Based Research Centre (CBRC)</i> <i>Alex Moorji, Coordinator and Implementation Lead, CBRC</i></p> <p>Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trans Wellness Initiative (TWI) is a program run by the Community-Based Research Centre (CBRC). CBRC leads, informs and directs community-led research and is used to inform policy to improve the lives of gay, bi, trans, two-spirit, non-binary and queer people. • CBRC creates networks and coalitions across Canada. Locally, it works with the Alberta Trans Health Network – created with organizations in Alberta to promote connectivity and collaboration with those involved in trans and gender diverse health. • TWI began in 2019 to create awareness of affirming health care resources for trans and non-binary people. • Its website (transwellnessinitiative.ca) houses a trans wellness initiative provider directory with affirming providers and services, as well as a page for navigating HRT (hormone replacement therapy) access in Alberta. • TWI provided input to a Primary Care Resource Guide – a resource for trans or non-binary people to bring with them when seeing practitioners as preliminary information that will lead to more affirming care. • TWI designed Introduction to Affirming Spaces training – free online training for anyone, to help foster affirming healthcare practices. It is a collection of resources and information to give practitioners the tools needed to begin offering affirming care.
Presentation	Alberta Health Update



	<p><i>Carol Taylor, Director, Claims & Special Programs</i></p> <p>Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding changes to Alberta’s Gender Surgery Program – from the previous limitation of two psychiatrists needed for referral, to any licensed Alberta physician in trans gender health. • Three surgeries Alberta provides funding for are phalloplasty, vaginoplasty and metoidioplasty. • Surgeries occur at Centre Metropolitain de Chirurgie in Montreal, QB, a private clinic with three surgeons having the only surgical expertise for this in Canada. Alberta Health provides funding approval and does not schedule the surgeries. • Alberta Health Medical Advisor Dr. Neil Hagan has worked with Alberta specialists to arrange for Alberta patients to receive post-operative care in healing, infections, urology and gynecology, reducing the length of stay out of province. • Associated surgeries such as breast surgery or hysterectomy are funded by Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan, not the Gender Surgery Program. Alberta surgeons provide these surgeries. • Alberta Health doesn’t pay for non-health services such as electrolosis and voice training. • Application criteria for referreals are based on international standards – World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH). Alberta’s process is consistent with other provinces. • Funding applications are accepted by licensed Alberta physicians with competencies in transgender health in addition to psychiatrist referrals. Two physician referrals are required – a primary physician and consultant physician. • This change will improve access as it reduces wait times and is more focused on competencies than credentials. • The application is a holistic assessment of one’s physical, mental and social health. <p>For information on services covered by the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP) visit the Government of Alberta website. For information on Alberta’s Gender Reaffirming Prgram, visit AHS website.</p>
<p>Action Item</p>	<p>Carol will take feedback on wording in the application form re: hysterectomy and associated surgeries back to her team for revision consideration. Carol will loop back with the PAC with confirmed intent of the form.</p> <p>Andrea will compile feedback re: naming of Alberta Gender Surgery Program and share with Carol.</p>



Council Work Commitments	A sub-committee met in April to draft five statements for the 2021-2023 SOGIE PAC Commitments and Priorities (formerly Work Plan). Council discussed revisions and a final draft will be shared with Council for final approval via email. The five areas of focus are: Best Practice; Training/Education; Engagement; Trans Health; Culture. They will be posted online once ready.
Action Item	Janine and Andrea to provide final draft of 2021-2023 Commitments to Council via email for approval.
2021-22 Meeting Dates	Council voted on meeting dates through to May 2022. New dates are posted to ahs.ca/advisorycouncils .
Date of Next Meeting	Date: Saturday, September 25, 2021 Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. 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.