



## Greater Edmonton Health Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

September 9, 2021 / 6:00 pm – 9:00 p.m. / Zoom

ATTENDEES & INTRODUCTIONS	
<b>Members</b>	Floyd House (Chair), Rume Djebah (Vice-Chair), Harman Kahlon, Shakib Rahman, Kailey Schmidt, Jahnavel Sanchez-Noguez, Nicholas Polturak, Vincent Liu, Janice Willier
<b>AHS</b>	Carol Anderson, Maya Atallah, Maura Beaton, Dr. Chris Sikora, Dr. David Zygun
<b>Regrets</b>	Towunmi (Priscilla) Coker, Nazret Russon
<b>Public</b>	2
<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>	Floyd House welcomed all in attendance and went through introductions. Floyd provided a land acknowledgment.
<b>Approval of previous minutes</b>	April 15, 2021 minutes were reviewed and approved by consensus.
STANDING ITEMS	
<b>Action items from the previous meeting</b>	<p>Action items from the April 15, 2021 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carol Anderson will connect with the COVID-19 operational task force to present to GEHAC on post-COVID work that is being done. <b>Pending – presentation will be provided at the next meeting.</b></li> <li>• Carol Anderson will look into what 811 is advising patients re strep throat testing. <b>Complete</b></li> <li>• Maya Atallah will connect with Dr. Silvius for an updated presentation on the work happening with Continuing Care. <b>Pending – presentation will be provided at a later date.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Alberta Health Services Zone Update</b>	<p>Carol Anderson, Chief Zone Officer, Edmonton Zone, Clinical Operations, and Dr. David Zygun, Zone Medical Director, Edmonton Zone shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on hospital ICU capacity in the Edmonton Zone.</li> <li>• Work is underway on the Indigenous Health Services Plan with Edmonton Zone dyads and the Indigenous Wellness Core (IWC).</li> <li>• Update on the new Edmonton Hospital &amp; Health Campus, and engagement work done. More information can be found on <a href="https://www.together4health.ca">Together4Health</a>.</li> </ul>



- A collaborative and integrated plan to support addiction recovery and opioid response work is underway between community stakeholders and the Edmonton Zone addiction and mental health team.
- Syphilis plan in Alberta response to community needs for Edmonton and northern Alberta. More information can be found on the [AHS website](#).
- Surgical postponements are required to ensure ICU capacity to care for those who need critical, intensive care. Reassured Council that AHS continues to perform all emergent and urgent cancer surgeries.

**Dr. Chris Sikora, Medical Officer of Health, Edmonton Zone, Population, Public and Indigenous Health, provided the following update:**

- The COVID-19 pandemic is now in the fourth wave and there is more community spread, particularly among those unvaccinated. COVID-19 information can be found at [ahs.ca/covid](https://ahs.ca/covid).
- The immunization campaign for the COVID-19 vaccine is going great. Many sessions have been held to educate the community and promote the vaccine. In September/October AHS will go into schools to help immunize students ages 12+. For more information on school immunizations [click here](#).
- Alberta has started to offer third doses of COVID-19 vaccine to immunocompromised people living in congregate care.
- AHS is working with community partners to address opioid and overdoses. Emergency Medical services is one approach; prevention, harm reduction and drug treatment need to be factored in.
- One approach to handling the syphilis outbreak is to promote more testing which will lead to more treatment.

**Council Members asked the following questions:**

**Q:** Are Supervised Consumption Sites still active?

**A:** There are two maintained sites in the downtown core, however, the focus is on increasing treatment, harm reduction and prevention.

**Q:** What is the age group most affected by opioid overdose and an example of a prevention strategy used by AHS?

**A:** It's primarily ages 20-50. One partner AHS works with is the City of Edmonton and a committee called the Community Liaison Committee Partners in Drug Poisoning Prevention. The committee is comprised of representatives from community, business, health, lived and living experience, and experts. Its mandate is to identify opportunities for collaborative



	<p>community-based approaches to reducing the amount of harm associated with substance use in Edmonton. For example, health promotion campaigns and education on where to access resources.</p> <p><b>Q:</b> Why are vaccinated patients still ending up in ICU?  <b>A:</b> Alberta data shows clear effectiveness of fully vaccinated individuals (those with two doses). Vaccines are significantly reducing loss of life, hospitalization and admission to ICUs across the province. However, to have community protection, public health measures still need to be practiced along with the vaccine to decrease community transmission. Dr. Zygun explained the difference between vaccinated vs. non-vaccinated patients that are seen in ICU and how the survival rate and severity of illness varies.</p>
<p><b>Voices of the Community</b></p>	<p>A community member stated there is distrust among some towards healthcare and government. One cause may be the amount of misinformation shared on social media.</p> <p>Dr. Sikora responded there have been several community engagement sessions to address people’s questions and concerns, in partnership with various community partners and medical officers of health. The goal has been to identify formal and informal leaders in various communities to help connect with them in culturally appropriate ways.</p> <p>A community member shared a concern about placement of seniors into continuing care and how, with the pandemic, surgeries and referral to see a specialist are delayed more than usual.</p>
<p><b>Council Round Table</b></p>	<p>The following was shared by Council members regarding COVID-19 and vaccine roll out in their communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hesitation is evident. Many people know at least one person who is unsure of the vaccine. The debate is growing between non-vaccinated and vaccinated people.</li> <li>• Kudos to AHS and other organizations on implementing the <a href="#">immunization policy</a> for staff and volunteers.</li> <li>• In the Parkland School Division, there are many mixed emotions and questions about the upcoming school year. There is no contact tracing and no masking policy which is leaving parents and teachers unsure what to expect.</li> <li>• Vaccination while pregnant is a difficult decision to make. Dr. Zygun and Dr. Sikora spoke on how there is much to consider. It is important patients have all the information they need to make an informed decision. AHS asks individuals to look at both the risks and benefits to find a solution they are comfortable with.</li> </ul>



	<p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council member Harmon Kahlons sits on the new Edmonton Hospital Patient and Family Advisory Council and gave an update on the work being done.</li> <li>• There are concerns with EMS in Strathcona County related to delays in service to the area.</li> </ul>
<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	
<p><b>Presentation(s)</b></p>	<p><b>GEHAC Orientation</b>  <i>Maura Beaton – Lead, Advisory Council Relations, Community and External Relations</i>  <i>Maya Atallah – Advisory Council Coordinator, Community and External Relations</i></p> <p>A presentation was given to build an understanding of Alberta Health Services, the role of the Advisory Council, different advisor groups across the province and how they work together. An overview of HAC 2.0 was provided.</p>
<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p>	<p>Date: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 – Engagement Event          Time: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.          Location: Zoom</p>

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