

Lesser Slave Lake

2016-17 Annual Report



Lesser Slave Lake
Health Advisory Council

Healthy Albertans.
Healthy Communities.
Together.

Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors

The health system belongs to over four million Albertans and, as such, their voices need to be heard — and considered — when Alberta Health Services is planning and making decisions about healthcare delivery. Our Health Advisory Councils, Provincial Advisory Councils and Wisdom Council bring the diverse voices of Albertans to the decision-making table, so health services can meet the unique needs of communities across the province.

Our councils are made up of people who are passionate about understanding what's working and where improvements can be made in how health services are delivered in their communities. Advisory councils demonstrate our true commitment to community engagement – their work is strategic and valued, shaping the future of healthcare and enhancing care in communities.



Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn

There was much growth over the past year. It was a year of renewed commitment from Alberta Health Services to ensure councils act as the voices of their communities, supported by extensive recruitment to strengthen the reach and diversity of council members. For the first time, Council Chairs collaborated to share their priorities and identify similar priorities across the province. This approach was valuable and created synergies and linkages between councils across Alberta. At the same time, the collaboration between councils also showed how their priorities clearly aligned with Alberta Health Services' strategic approach and how we are all working towards the same, very important goals.

On behalf of the Alberta Health Services Board of Directors, our leadership team and our workforce, I want to thank you for being our partners. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with councils and the strategic value they offer.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn
Vice Chair, Board of Directors
Chair, Community Engagement Committee of the Board
Alberta Health Services

About community engagement

Alberta Health Services is committed to meaningful and authentic community engagement. Engaging with Albertans means patients, families and members of the public contribute to healthcare solutions and the betterment of our system. They can benefit by having their needs reflected in planning and decision making. Engagement aligns with the Alberta Health Services culture of caring and listening, which results in more patient-centred care, local decision making and more open and trusting relationships.

Role of advisory councils

Alberta Health Services values advisory council members as volunteers, leaders and partners in healthcare planning. They help build a stronger relationship between the people in their communities and those who work in the health system.

Members of Health Advisory Councils, Provincial Advisory Councils, and Wisdom Council are Albertans who care about health of their communities, and are connected to the public in many different ways. They provide a grassroots perspective and an understanding of their communities' health needs, and they're interested in listening to the people. They also:



- share their communities' priorities with Alberta Health Services
- give advice and help to inform the decision-making process
- host public advisory council meetings, in addition to promoting and participating in activities that enhance Albertans' health
- engage with and share information with the community, and follow up on commitments
- give feedback on public education materials, policies, or discussion topics
- share information on health services with the community and provide feedback and input to Alberta Health Services

Councils attend the annual Advisory Councils' Fall Forum to hear a variety of presentations and network with fellow council members, Alberta Health Services staff and members of the Board of Directors.

The Health Advisory Councils and the Provincial Advisory Councils are supported by the Alberta Health Services Community Engagement department, and report through the Council of Chairs to the Community Engagement Committee of the Alberta Health Services Board of Directors. The Wisdom Council reports to the AHS President and CEO.

12 Health Advisory Councils

Bring the voices of Alberta communities to healthcare services. Each council represents a geographical area within the province.

2 Provincial Advisory Councils

Advise on provincewide services and programs for addiction and mental health, and cancer.

1 Wisdom Council

Provides guidance and recommendations to ensure Alberta Health Services develops and implements culturally appropriate and innovative health service delivery for Indigenous Peoples.

Albertans are represented by 12 Health Advisory Councils. Areas are determined by population and travel routes, and are detailed on [this map](#).

The two Provincial Advisory Councils and Wisdom Council operate provincially. Their membership spans all of Alberta.

[View map of treaty areas and indigenous communities in Alberta](#)

For more information on membership:

[Health Advisory Councils](#)

[Addiction and Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council](#)

[Cancer Provincial Advisory Council](#)

[Wisdom Council](#)



Council of Chairs

The Council of Chairs is made up of all advisory council Chairs, who meet five times a year to further the roles, responsibilities, and priorities of councils at a provincial level. The Council of Chairs determines themes or commonalities across different communities to bring forward to Alberta Health Services' leadership and Board of Directors.

Including the public voice in Alberta Health Services planning

In early 2016, Alberta Health Services' Strategic Planning Department met with Health Advisory Councils across the province to gather input for the [2017 - 2020 Health and Business Plan](#). Each council was asked to provide feedback on the plan to ensure the priorities of their communities were considered in the development of the strategic goals for the organization.

Members from various Health Advisory Councils participated in the following provincial committees:

- Apple Magazine Editorial Council
- Continuing Care Quality Committee
- [Health Link](#) and [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](#)
- Patient First Steering Committee
- Patient and Family Advisory Council
- Long range planning

Message from the Chair, Lesser Slave Lake Health Advisory Council

During the year, our council engaged communities through community events and trade fairs, and we again held our meetings in all regions of our large area.

This past year has seen a number of positive changes in the region. In Wabasca, construction began on a new ambulance garage with living accommodation, an initiative that council recommended. Red Earth Creek now has a Nurse Practitioner providing care to area residents.



Ken Matthews

The opening of the new High Prairie Health Complex was also exciting news for the area, and members of our council attended the grand opening. This \$228-million complex includes a state-of-the-art emergency department, an acute care clinical building, a continuing care centre and the High Prairie Community Health and Wellness clinic. With 67 continuing care beds, the new facility nearly doubles the number of continuing care spaces in the community.

We recruited five new council members from High Prairie, Slave Lake, Wabasca, and Red Earth Creek, all of them dedicated and knowledgeable additions to our council. These members were officially appointed by the Alberta Health Services Board in the fall of 2016.

Recruitment and retention of medical professionals is an ongoing challenge. We have also been actively advocating for permanent dialysis services in the High Prairie Health Complex. For future consideration and possible expansion, space has been set aside for a permanent dialysis unit in the new High Prairie Health Complex. Alberta Health Services' Northern Alberta Renal Program (NARP) continues to monitor the patient needs in High Prairie and will be reviewing the service need. We, too, will continue to meet with NARP to share our feedback and concerns.

As a council, we are dedicated to advocating for mental health services, and will focus our efforts on this area of healthcare in the upcoming year. Mental health continues to be a major concern across the region, especially in the Wabasca area.

We also look forward to further strengthening our relationship with the Alberta Health Services Board and senior leadership. We appreciate the support and presentations from Alberta Health Services staff this past year and we look forward to working with them in the upcoming year. I thank all of our council members for their support and input this past year - your dedication is very much appreciated. Also, thank you to our community members for sharing their views.

Sincerely,

Ken Matthews, Chair
Lesser Slave Lake Health Advisory Council

About us

2016 -2017 Council Members

Current Members		
Ken	Matthews (Chair)	High Prairie
Ernie	Grach (Vice Chair)	Wabasca
Dollie	Anderson	Red Earth Creek
Lindsay	Davies	High Prairie
Lindy	Fors	Slave Lake
Connie	McKee	Grouard
Brian	Rosche	Widewater
Shahriar	Rozen	Wabasca
Eleonore	Twardzik	Wabasca
Marian	Wolitski	Wabasca

Past Members		
Colleen	Greer	High Prairie
Joy	James	Slave Lake
Edith	MacKenzie	Slave Lake
Lorraine	Muskwa	Wabasca
Janet	Ross	Slave Lake

5 public meetings were held in High Prairie, Wabasca, and Slave Lake

Topics on the minds of our council and community members:

- Addiction and mental health needs and services
- Access to renal dialysis services in High Prairie
- Recruitment and retention of medical professionals
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) facilities in Wabasca
- Non-urgent medical transportation

What we are proud of

Engaging with the public

- Our council understands the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships with partner organizations. At our September 2016 meeting, we met at the Pee Kis Kwe Tan “Let’s Talk” Society in Wabasca/Desmarais, and heard an update from the society’s director on the addiction and mental health needs and services in the community.

Providing feedback and advice to Alberta Health Services

- In fall 2016, we wrote a letter to Alberta Health Services North Zone leadership supporting the work of the Diabetes Management Advocacy Group – High Prairie. Council understands the importance of access to dialysis services in their home communities and commends Diabetes Management Advocacy Group – High Prairie for the work they are doing.
- At the May 2016 meeting, representatives from the Alberta Health Services North Zone Strategic Planning Department team provided council with a presentation on the Quadruple Aim Balanced Scorecard approach to planning, and we were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback which was then incorporated into the plan.

Enhancing the health of community members

- We have been quite active and vocal in advocating for improved Emergency Medical Services (EMS) buildings, and are pleased that construction is underway on a new EMS bay, including staff quarters, in Wabasca/Desmarais.
- Our advocacy efforts for more care givers were rewarded in winter 2016 when a Nurse Practitioner was hired to serve the area of Red Earth Creek.

Key learnings

- At each council meeting, Alberta Health Services North Zone leaders provided our council with an update on key initiatives and available services in the area. We have been able to share this information with members of our communities, and also take this opportunity to bring forward public questions and feedback.

A look ahead

We believe in the impact we have as a council and will continue working with our rural and urban friends, family, neighbours and Alberta Health Services to advise on community health promotion, priorities, and projects.

We view addiction and mental health to be a main priority for our council and for our region, and would like to focus on the following:

- Advocating for more school counsellors in vulnerable communities.
- Strengthening partnerships between key addiction and mental health staff, service providers and community stakeholders.
- Advocating for increased access to clinical mental health services that can provide treatment.

Throughout the year, we heard a significant amount of feedback on the need for enhanced non-urgent transportation options for patients travelling to other communities for medical appointments and procedures. As a council, we intend to support this need by:

- Researching and providing Alberta Health Services a report on various transportation delivery models.
- Facilitating enhanced collaboration between community stakeholders and non-urgent transportation providers.
- We strongly believe in being able to access the right kind of care, in the right place, at the right time and will carry on advocating for regional standards of care, service, assessment and treatment within our council area.

Get involved

Think of the difference you can make to the health and well-being of your family, friends, neighbours and community by sharing your thoughts and ideas with Alberta Health Services. Get involved:

- Attend an upcoming [Health Advisory Council meeting](#).
- [Make a presentation at a council meeting](#) on a health area of interest or concern.
- Think about volunteering your time as a council member. Recruitment drives happen annually. Members are appointed for three-year terms.

Connect with us:

- [Info on Community Engagement](#)
- lesserslavelake@ahs.ca
- [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)