

Oldman River Health Advisory Council

2023-24 Annual Report



**Alberta Health
Services**

Oldman River
Health Advisory Council

Message from Athana Mentzelopoulos & Dr. Lyle Oberg

As we reflect on the journey of the Health Advisory Councils over the past 15 years, it is with a profound sense of gratitude and appreciation that we bid farewell. The dedication, passion, and invaluable contributions of each member has left an indelible mark on Alberta's healthcare landscape, touching countless lives across our communities.

Since its beginnings, the Health Advisory Councils have served as a beacon of community engagement and collaboration, bridging the gap between healthcare providers and the diverse needs of Alberta. Your commitment to fostering dialogue, advocating for patient-centred care, and championing initiatives to enhance the quality of care in your respective communities has been truly commendable.

We are deeply indebted to the hundreds of volunteers who have served on the HACs and who have generously devoted their time and expertise, along with their unwavering support to improving healthcare in our province. Your efforts have helped to shape policies, drive innovations and ensure the voices of Albertans were heard by decision-makers.

While this marks the end of an era, we hope many of you are looking at new opportunities with Regional Advisory Councils, and have reached out to express your interest. The Health Advisory Councils may cease to exist in their current form but the bonds forged and the lessons learned will endure; the Regional Advisory Councils can benefit from their history and the commitment of those who have served.

On behalf of Alberta Health Services, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to each and everyone of the members who served on Councils over the past 15 years. Your contributions will continue to inspire us.

Athana Mentzelopoulos
President and CEO, Alberta Health Services

Dr. Lyle Oberg
Executive Board Chair, Alberta Health Services

QUOTE FROM ZONE LEADERSHIP

Our HAC members have been with us since the inception of AHS, sharing the views and perspectives of the communities they represent. We appreciate the conversations we've had, value their time as volunteers and are grateful for the relationships we've built along the way. Their input into shaping and supporting healthcare in the South Zone has been invaluable and we want to thank them for their hard work over the years.

Linda Iwasiw and Dr. Aaron Low
Chief Zone Officer and Zone Medical Director, South Zone

WHO WE ARE



*Top Row L-R: Colleen Bianchi (Chair), Stephanie Leavitt (Vice Chair), Jacen Abrey, Jim Bennett
Row 2 L-R: Barbara Boyer, Rebecca Bultsma, Behnia Hooshyarkhah, Marni Hope
Row 3 L-R: Anne Michaealis, Tracy Oosterbroek, Virginia Ridge
Bottom Row L-R: Margaret Thomas, Doug Thornton*

Being part of the Oldman River HAC, was a learning curve, where I had the opportunity to understand health situations in neighbouring communities.

Colleen Bianchi
Chair, Oldman River Health Advisory Council

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Since their inception in 2009, Advisory Council members have shared advice and feedback from their communities with Alberta Health Services (AHS). They've held public meetings and engagement activities virtually or in locations throughout their geographic area that further contributed to improving healthcare services in Alberta.

In 2023-24, the Oldman River Health Advisory Council (ORHAC) focused on its work commitment priorities, which included: Alternate Levels of Care – Seniors and Continuing Care, Access to Care and Addiction and Mental Health.

The Council hosted three meetings and one event where participants gained insights on South Zone Healthcare Planning, Connect Care, Health Link 811, Milk River Attraction & Retention Committee, Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP). Council also had the opportunity to tour the Wisdom Room when they met at the Chinook Regional Hospital.

In November, Council members met with Health Minister Adriana LaGrange to learn of the Government of Alberta's plans to refocus the health system; they later met with Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health, MLA Martin Long, to talk about their successes and potential opportunities for the new Regional Advisory Councils (RAC) being established by the Government of Alberta.

A few Council members provided input on South Zone Healthcare Planning committees in the following areas: primary care, continuing care, addiction and mental health, health promotion and the social determinants of health, and acute care sustainability.

The Chair, Vice Chair and Council Coordinator met monthly with AHS South Zone leadership to ensure Council-related matters and kudos could be addressed in a timely manner.

Community concerns shared with Zone leadership included:

- Physician recruitment and retention.
- Milk River Clinic Emergency Department closures.

Council engaged with AHS on the following topics:

- South Zone Healthcare Planning.
- Physician recruitment and retention.
- AHS' 10-year Health Plan.

BY THE NUMBERS

- 147 public attended meetings and events through the year.
- 4 meetings and events hosted between July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024.

THANK YOU MEMBERS PAST AND PRESENT

Alice Rojeanne Parker
Angela Best
Anne Michaelis
Barbara Boyer
Behnia Hooshyarkhah
Beverly Garbutt
Bill Martens
Bonnie Linderman
Brian Hammond
Chris Schamber
Clifford Elle
Colleen Bianchi
Danni McKenzie
Debra Gazeley
Diane Herrick
Diane Poynter
Dick Burnham
Doug Thornton
Emma Hulit
George Epp
Georgette Fox
Geraldine Eagle Speaker

Heather Hirsch
Helen McMenamin
Jacen Abrey
James Bennett
Jeff Warren
Jill Bruder
John Vizza
Kathryn Petrunia
Kerry Ishida
Kerry Milder
Kevin Nemeth
Lauren Williams
Lawrence Dzuren
Lenore Rockenbach
Lorraine Neal
Lyll Black
Margaret Thomas
Marni Hope
Michael Hansen
Michelle Dobek-Koinberg
Monique Sedgwick
Paul Fortney

Rebecca Bultsma
Robin Little Bear
Ryaan EL-Andari
Samuel Ohemeng
Sanowar Hossain
Sharon Brown
Sharon Solvey
Sherri Koskewich
Stephanie Leavitt
Susan Koots
Tanya Pace-Crosschild
Tara Linklater
Tracy Oosterbroek
Vicki Koersen
Virginia Ridge
Virginia Goulet
Wayne McGinn
Willemina Mulder*

**Apologies if anyone is missing from this list.*

