



True North Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2023 / 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. / Zoom

ATTENDEES & INTRODUCTIONS	
Members	Nella Fehr (Chair), Rick Cartier (Vice Chair), Shelly Komarnicki, Liane Mercredi and Tracey Stauffer
AHS	Jo Blakley, Deanna Dament, Angie Mann, Shauna Wallbank
Regrets	Gord Burnell, Wilma Cardinal, Darrell Derksen, Oxana Kabardina, Gina Martens, Crystal McLean, Julie Melville, Judith Wiebe
Public	1
Welcome & Introductions	Coordinator Jo Blakley welcomed all in attendance and went through introductions and provided a land acknowledgment.
Approval of previous minutes	January 25, 2023, minutes were reviewed and approved by consensus.
STANDING ITEMS	
Action items from previous meeting	No action items from the January 25, 2023, meeting.
Alberta Health Services Zone Update	<p>Angie Mann, Director of Clinical Operations, Allied Health, Acute Care and Seniors for Area 1, North Zone, provided a written report with information about workforce recruitment, capital projects and major events and initiatives specific to the local area. Some highlights included were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addiction and Mental Health (AMH) – Area 1 is developing the Peer Support Program Manual as this remains the first initiative of its kind currently in the North Zone. Work focuses on in-person visits with clients that remain vulnerable within all communities in High Level, Fort Vermillion, La Crete, and Rainbow Lake. • AMH services in Area 2 have now expanded to two full-time addiction staff to support the communities of Rainbow Lake, La Crete and Fort Vermillion to reduce the travel barrier to clients. • AMH – An event is currently in the planning stage for Drugs Don't Discriminate exhibits in High Level and Fort Vermillion. • Area 1 – bed closures for both High Level (6 beds) and Fort Vermilion (10 Beds) continue for the month of June due to nursing vacancies.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta Surgical Initiative (ASI) – The North Zone has met and exceeded the provincial targeted volume and waitlist reduction for the fourth quarter due to the hard work of surgical teams, the North Zone ASI team and local and zone leadership’s dedication to improving surgical access for patients requiring surgical services. • The Primary Care Network (PCN) Alberta Healthy Living Program offers virtual education for various chronic diseases, self-management, and a supervised exercise program via ZOOM. • Recruiting volunteers: anyone interested in volunteering with AHS, can visit the website.
Physician Recruitment Report	<p>Shauna Wallbank, Physician Resource Planner, provided a written report and shared that in 2023, a total of 20 family medicine physicians and 12 new specialists were recruited across the North Zone. Some highlights included were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Vermillion has seven family physicians (four sharing one role). • High Level – there are eleven family physicians and one vacancy for a pediatrician. • La Crete has two family physicians and two open vacancies. • Physician vacancies or “Recruitment Targets” can be found on the AHS Doctor Jobs website.
Community Partners	<p>Holly Handfield, Rural Community Consultant with Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP), shared updates with Council. Some highlights included were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 Rhapsody Award recipients: Physician Award: Dr. Noel DaCunha, practicing in Westlock and Health-care Heroes Award: Grimshaw Community Health Centre Emergency Team. • 2024 RhPAP Conference - The call for proposals is now open for communities interested in hosting the Conference. • Preceptor opportunities - The University of Calgary Cumming School of Medicine and the University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry urgently need new rural preceptors for the fall. • RhPAP offers continuing professional development for practicing rural Alberta physicians and other health professionals to upgrade existing skills or gain new skills to meet the medical needs of their community and surrounding areas.
Voices of the Community	No public in attendance.
Council Round Table	Rainbow Lake – Vice Chair Rick Cartier shared that he is back home since being evacuated, and Rainbow Lake had no loss of homes or businesses.



	<p>High Level – Council Member Shelly Komarnicki shared that during wildfire evacuation Dr. Parker travelled to the community of Meander River to see people instead of them having to travel any distance. There was encouraging feedback from the community, and it was well received. Angie Mann added that Telus donated a bus for doctors to travel to sites to deliver services and this proved to be beneficial.</p>
NEW BUSINESS	
Date of Next Meeting	Next Council Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Date: Wednesday, September 27, 2023• Time: 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.• Location: St. Theresa General Hospital (4506 46 Ave. Fort Vermilion)

Our meetings are open to the public. Dates and locations are [available here](#).
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