

Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council 2023-24 Annual Report



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

Working with and getting to know the diverse members of the Health Advisory Council in the Central Zone has truly been a pleasure. Their dedication to offering insights and input on healthcare in Central Alberta has proven to be immensely valuable. I appreciate the countless hours that Council members have volunteered to collaborate with the zone leadership teams.

Janice Stewart
Chief Zone Officer, Central Zone

WHO WE ARE



*Top L-R: Allen Dietz (Chair), Brett Huculak (Vice Chair), Judy Acres, Lori Barber
Row 2 L-R: Cathy Bartley, John Erkelens, Don Gulayec
Row 3 L-R: Cyndy Heslin, Agnes Hoveland, Norm Martineau
Bottom L-R: Shana McIntyre, Stephanie Munro, Maya Rathnavalu*

“With all the changes in the last year within AHS, you have continued to listen to and support HACs. Thank you! (anonymous, from annual Advisory Council Satisfaction Survey)”

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.

Throughout the year, Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council (YEHAC) collaborated with AHS Health Link with a goal to enhance public understanding of healthcare navigation. One notable partnership focused on the seamless coordination between 911 and 811 services. At a meeting attended by AHS Emergency Medical Services staff, insightful discussions and statistical analyses revealed a positive trend: a decrease in code red incidents and an improvement in staffing levels, reflecting encouraging progress. However, sustaining this momentum demands continued dedication and effort.

Recognizing the significance of senior health and continuing care services within their communities, particularly among an aging population, the DTHAC, alongside the Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council (YEHAC), hosted an event featuring AHS and community experts. The session addressed topics such as:

- Seniors and continuing care programs;
- The long-term care placement process;
- Fall prevention;
- The Seniors and Continuing Care Provincial Health Advisory Council (SCC PAC);
- Dementia Friendly Communities; and,
- Healthy aging initiatives.

In 2024, Council shifted its focus toward mental wellness with a session on advancements in mental health services in the Central Zone. The session was beneficial in raising awareness of resources available to the public.

Closing out the year, YEHAC hosted an event centred on substance use and its impact on youth. Acknowledging that many youth experiment with substances such as alcohol and cannabis, the session underscored the importance of open dialogue about substance use, particularly the potential ramifications on physical and mental health. Participants were equipped with tools and resources to engage in meaningful conversations with children and youth in their lives, emphasizing proactive intervention and support.

Hot topics of discussion included:

- Workforce recruitment (shortages).
- Temporary service disruptions with specialized services (i.e., labour and delivery).
- Emergency department closures.

BY THE NUMBERS

- 155 public attended meetings and events through the year.
- 4 meetings and events hosted.

THANK YOU MEMBERS PAST AND PRESENT

Allen Dietz	Ken McNeil
Brett Huculak	Leah Taylor
Agnes Hoveland	Linda Graham
Andrei Dolgirev	Lois Byers
Audrey Parke	Lori Barber
Barbara Read	Lynda Oberle
Barry Hall	Mabel Eschak
Bradley Adams	Martha Waldorf
Brian Betts	Maya Rathnavalu
Colleen Swanson	Morris Smith
Cyndy Heslin	Norm Martineau
Darelen Bowal	Pat Taylor
Denis Cunninghame	Patricia Johnston
Deserrie Ruptash	Peter Karbashewski
Don Gulayec	Rick Roberts
Doug MacKay	Robert Bachmann
Elaine Sorochan	Shana McIntyre
Elna Eidsvik	Shari Irving
Gary Duffett	Stephanie Munro
Glenn Thompson	Terry Tropak
John Erkelen	Tianna Klein
Judy Acres	Wendy Bannister*
Karl Rodney Krips	
Katherine Carey	

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

