



True North Health Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday September 22, 2021 / 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. / Zoom

ATTENDEES & INTRODUCTIONS	
Members	Richard Cartier (Vice-Chair), Jan Welke, Judith Wiebe, Nella Fehr, Ray Toews
AHS	Maya Atallah, Maura Beaton, Kate Dunn, Dr. Mark Forder, John LaForest, Angie Mann, Roxy Thomas
Regrets	Liane Mercredi (Chair), Pam Boese, Wilma Cardinal, Jill Didzena, Jessica Juneau
Public	Four
Welcome & Introductions	Maya welcomed all in attendance and went through introductions. Richard provided a land acknowledgment.
Approval of previous minutes	February 24, 2021 minutes were reviewed and approved by consensus via email.
STANDING ITEMS	
Action items from the previous meeting	Action items from the February 24, 2021 meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jessica Juneau will get clarification on the status of the Rainbow Lake Airport. Complete
Alberta Health Services Zone Update	Angie Mann, Director, Clinical Operations, provided the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AHS has developed a partnership with the University of Calgary for nursing students to complete practicums in Fort Vermilion and La Crete. The hope is this will attract staff to want to work in Area 1. There is a shortage of physicians in the community which has led to Emergency Departments being temporarily closed overnight. Clarification on ventilator equipment availability; does not translate to operational capability. There is a shortage of trained staff able to run all available equipment. All elective surgeries are temporarily postponed in September due to an increase in COVID-19 activity and nursing staff vacancies at the Northwest Health Centre in High Level. There are recruitment challenges at homecare sites in La Crete and Fort Vermilion. All management positions have been filled and a full time pediatrician has been hired.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Northwest Health Foundation has partnered with the Edmonton Oilers and raised funds for the purchase of picnic tables for break areas for staff to enjoy. <p>Dr. Mark Forder, Associate Zone Medical Director Public Health, shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The difference between a medical student and a resident doctor, and the challenges of having both practices in the North. This includes the availability of support staff to assist medical students, space capability in facilities and lifestyle considerations to consider when moving to work in the North. Update on physician recruitment. <p>Roxy Thomas, Director, Addiction and Mental Health, North Zone, and John LaForest, Manger, Addiction and Mental Health, North Zone, provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health supports for recruitment and retention in Area 1 and Area 2. Despite staffing shortages, services have not been impacted. The priority is ensuring services are maintained in emergency departments. Approval to hire peer support workers for Area 1 staff in an effort to help with retention in the area. Virtual supports are available more now, and used as appropriate to do so. The Zone is working with First Nation communities to provide additional support through telehealth. Work is underway to provide supports for communities impacted by recent news re residential schools.
<p>Community Partners</p>	<p>Holly Handfield, Rural Community Consultant with Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP), shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a vacancy for a RhPAP consultant in the north. The Rural Community Building Series workshop is available in partnership with Tamarack Institute. Visit RhPAP website for more course descriptions and dates. The Rhapsody Award winners for 2021 were announced during Alberta Rural Health Week, though celebrations are postponed due to the pandemic.
<p>Voices of the Community</p>	<p>Public in attendance shared concerns about hub-centralized services and the barrier to travel to those sites. Dr. Mark Forder explained that while the expectation is that a physician encompasses a broad skill set, most times family physicians will refer patients to a specialist when needed. A hub allows the merging of resources whereby physicians can maintain their competency and provide well-rounded care in their communities.</p>



Council Round Table	<p>The following was shared by Council members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kudos to Aeromedical Emergency Services out of Fort Vermilion and to Angie Mann for her response to patients' operational concerns. • The old Hudson's Bay Company Factor's House in Fort Vermilion is under renovation to be used for residential housing and possibly act as an Airbnb. This will help with housing and getting temporary locoums or health care staff or even patients a place to stay. • Concern about personal healthcare records being shared as part of AHS' immunization policy. Maya and Maura reassured that access is limited to a small, select staff who are restricted to confirming COVID-19 immunization, nothing more. • High Level pharmacies will now offer the rapid COVID-19 antigen test, something highly requested in the community as vaccine uptake is low; testing will allow people to meet provincial Public Health restrictions.
Action Item(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ray Toews will share more information on the Hudson's Bay Company Factor's House housing options once it is available.
NEW BUSINESS	
Presentation(s)	<p>Project ECHO (Extension for Community Health Outcomes): Chronic Hepatitis C <i>Kate Dunn, Community Integration Coordinator ECHO+, AHS Indigenous Wellness Core (IWC)</i></p> <p>The presentation included general information about Hepatitis C, symptoms, who should get screened, treatment and statistics on Hepatitis C in Canada and Alberta. Kate shared all the work being done to ensure screening is accessible in communities, and identified some of the barriers to being cured. ECHO+ can support communities through awareness, screening and connecting clients to treatment through a local medical team. When asked the length of treatment, Kate responded it's generally 8-12 months.</p>
Elections	<p>Nella Fehr put forth an expression of interest for the position of Chair. Maya Atallah asked three times if there were any further nominations from the floor.</p> <p>Moved by Ray Toews that nominations cease. MOTION CARRIED.</p> <p>Nella Fehr was declared Chair of the True North Health Advisory Council by acclamation.</p>



	<p>Richard (Rick) Cartier put forth an expression of interest for the position of Vice Chair. Maya Atallah asked three times if there were any further nominations from the floor.</p> <p>Moved by Ray Toews that nominations cease. MOTION CARRIED.</p> <p>Richard Cartier was declared Vice Chair of the True North Health Advisory Council by acclamation.</p>
Action Item	<p>Maya will share Chair and Vice Chair election results with the AHS Board.</p>
Date of Next Meeting	<p>Date: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 – Engagement Session</p> <p>Time: 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.</p> <p>Location: Online via Zoom</p> <p>Contact community.engagement@ahs.ca for details</p>

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