



Lakeland Communities Health Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 29, 2023 / 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. / Zoom

ATTENDEES & INTRODUCTIONS	
Members	Ida Edwards (Chair), Heather Stromquist (Vice Chair), Brad Eamon, Cheryl Edwards, Carrie Goldsmith, Terri Hampson, Victoria Sparklingeyes, Maureen Sullivan, Ed Tomaszak
AHS	Rob Barone, Lana Hataley, Melony Hatley, Lisa Laferriere, Valarian Nyaga, Carolyn Paradis, Shauna Wallbank
Regrets	Elzbieta (Ela) Berglund, Diane Mineault-Ellis and Joanne Williams
Public	17
Welcome & Introductions	Ida Edwards welcomed all in attendance, went through introductions and provided a land acknowledgement.
Approval of minutes	The April 27, 2023, minutes were reviewed and approved by consensus.
STANDING ITEMS	
Previous Action Items	Lana and Nicki to provide a list of AHS leadership for each area, including names and titles. Complete.
Alberta Health Services North Zone Update	<p>Lana Hataley, Senior Operating Officer, Areas 5-7 & Programmatic Lead Acute Care, Allied Health & Volunteer Services, shared the following:</p> <p>A written report was provided with information about workforce recruitment, capital projects and major events and initiatives specific to the local area. She also provided highlights from the North Zone Operational Plans and performance measures and initiatives. An update on the Connect Care launch 7 as well as several Public Health and Seniors Health initiatives were shared.</p>
Community Partners	<p>Anita Fagnan, Rural Community Consultant with Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP), shared the following:</p> <p>A written report was provided with information about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An upcoming Knowledge Now virtual session • Bursary for Internationally Educated Nurses (BIEN) program funding; REAL (Rural Education and Advanced Learning) program funding • Emergency Department Echo (EDE) course; and, how RhPAP offers continuing professional development for rural health professionals.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She also provided highlights from the Financial Incentive for Rural Staff Training and how it supported the Westlock healthcare team to upgrade its advanced skills for treating shock. <p>In response to a question on how to best inspire high school students to career options in healthcare, Anita adds that RhPAP is reaching high school students through the Let's Go Rural! program which highlights different healthcare careers for students and a variety of virtual events and information sessions. They are also partnering with Careers Next Generation. AHS also works with high schools through CALM (Career and Life Management) classes bringing students into facilities for exposure to the different fields available in healthcare.</p>
<p>Physician Recruitment Report</p>	<p>Shauna Wallbank, Physician Resource Planner, Medical Affairs, reported AHS is currently recruiting to the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonnyville - one family medicine physician with anesthesia; one family medicine physician with obstetrics; three additional family medicine physicians. A family medicine candidate is going through the recruitment process that they are hopeful about. • Cold Lake is recruiting five family medicine physicians, two radiologists and a surgical assistant. • St. Paul is recruiting two psychiatrists, one family medicine physician with anesthesia and one family medicine physician. • Lac La Biche is recruiting one family medicine physician with enhanced surgical skills (C-Section), one family medicine physician with obstetrics and two family medicine physicians with anesthesia. <p>In response to questions on why AHS doesn't bring locums into communities instead of closing departments and hospitals down, Shauna explained that it's hard to get locum doctors to small communities because they bill fee for service, so they want to make it worth their while financially. AHS is seeing a lot of physicians settling into communities and the pool of locums isn't getting bigger. They are private contractors, and they have a right to say no.</p>
<p>Voices of the Community</p>	<p>Dr. Shun Li, Dean of Health and Wellness at Portage College, shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portage College is launching a new program to attract more IENs to local communities: Internationally Educated Nurse Bridging Expansion Program (portagecollege.ca). • One of the biggest challenges to attracting and retaining staff in rural Alberta is affordable and available housing. <p>Pat Palechuk attended the Primary Care Network 2023 Strategic Planning Forum in Calgary. There was much discussion about patient and community-based care and many fabulous new doctors from across the province with a patient first mentality.</p>



<p>Report from the Chair</p>	<p>Ida Edwards, Council Chair, provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has one new member recruited, Liz MacPhee representing Cold Lake and who will begin January 1. • Ida attended Council of Chairs in Edmonton September 15; there was a presentation on Healthier Together, a community-based partnership that includes existing infrastructure to guide entire municipalities toward healthier ways of living, working, learning, and healing that give everyone a fair chance for health. • She also attended the Health Ministers meeting with HAC members on November 15, and she will be attending the upcoming Council of Chairs meeting Dec 11, if anyone has anything they would like her to bring forward.
<p>Council Roundtable and Good News Stories</p>	<p>Council members shared the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ida Edwards shared the mobile mammogram unit is coming to Athabasca has Dec 6 – 9, and Athabasca Town Council is working with STARS hoping to get a Helipad built in Athabasca in 2024. • Heather Stromquist shared the Lac La Biche Attraction and Retention Committee started an appreciation campaign to thank a healthcare worker in the region – it has been very well received. • Brad Eamon shared the community of St. Paul has had great things to say about the renovations at the health centre and recent Connect Care launch. • Teri Hampson shared that Elk Point has been trying to recruit travelling nurses to the community but noticed several rural communities have been competing against each other for the same staff. Municipalities need to find a way to work together. • Maureen Sullivan shared that Lamont is working to improve vaccination rates across the area. • Carrie Goldsmith stated residents if Bonnyville are very happy with the new emergency room renovations.
<p>Presentation - EMS</p>	<p>Rob Barone, Associate Executive Director for Emergency Medical Services provided an update on EMS services in the area:</p> <p>Lakeland EMS Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately nineteen ambulances are available: nine Advanced Life Support (advanced assessment skills, airway management and drugs); nine Basic Life Support (basic assessment skills, intermediate airway management, limited drugs) and one Non-Emergency Response Unit (NET). • Additional supports include medical first response model (local fire departments), air ambulance supports (fixed wing and STARS) as well as community AED programs.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Nov 2022 to Oct 2023, EMS responded to 18,196 requests for service. Responses were carried out by air and ground ambulance. Top destinations for transport were St. Paul, Bonnyville and Cold Lake. <p>Current EMS challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased 9-1-1 event volume; increased inter-facility transfer (IFT) volumes; emergency department offload delays; recruitment/retention challenges; global supply chain issues. The North Zone is currently experiencing a 30 per cent vacancy rate in full-time paramedic positions (60 per cent for casual positions). As a result, it is not uncommon to shut down 10-15 ambulances per day (15 – 20 per cent) throughout the Zone. <p>Addressing EMS service pressures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Alberta EMS Provincial Advisory Committee was struck in January 2022. The Alberta government has since accepted 53 recommendations focused on EMS system capacity and staff support, recruitment, and retention. Eight recommendations have already been implemented and many others are in progress. The AHS EMS 10-Point Plan is currently being implemented to improve EMS response capacity. Learn more here. <p>Rob adds the increase to ambulance usage over the last eight years is partially related to the population aging. During the pandemic a lot of people avoided seeing their family doctor or emergency departments to limit in-person contact. Sick people who avoided healthcare centres got sicker. We are starting to see an increase in number and an increase in acuity.</p>
Action Item(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anita to connect with Shun Li, Dean of Health and Wellness at Portage College. Sauna Wallbank to follow up with Brad Eamon regarding visiting specialists in St. Paul. Rob Barone to connect with Hank Holowaychuk regarding replacement supplies.
Date of Next Event	<p>Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 Time: 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Location: Zoom</p>

Our meetings are open to the public. Dates and locations are [available here](#).
[Find your Health Advisory Council here](#). Visit [Together 4 Health](#) (T4H) to engage with AHS online.

Email us at: lakelandcommunities@ahs.ca



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