

# Yellowhead East

## 2019-20 Annual Report



Yellowhead East  
Health Advisory Council

Healthy Albertans.  
Healthy Communities.  
**Together.**

## Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors



*Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn*

Alberta Health Services values Advisory Council members as volunteers, leaders and partners in health care planning. With every year that passes, I see how our Councils continue to grow and expand. They challenge us and ask really great questions, they share the AHS story with their communities, their families and neighbours – helping Albertans everywhere to better understand our complex health care system – and they advise AHS on our planning, programs and services.

We had a number of long-time members leaving Councils in 2019-20 and we would like to acknowledge their hard work, dedication and passion. While we will miss them, we also know it's important for new voices to join the conversation and we look forward to building new partnerships, relationships and connections.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn,  
Vice Chair, Board of Directors; Chair, AHS Community Engagement Committee of the Board

## Message from the Chair, Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council



*Cyndy Heslin*

With the launch of HAC 2.0 we are seeing new direction and more definition of our roles on Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council. We have endeavoured to adapt and change our work plan as needed to align with HAC 2.0. We have seen long-time members retire from their role while seeing new faces added to our team. We had two joint meetings, one with Lloydminster and District Health Advisory Council and David Thompson HAC which we have found very beneficial.

We have changed our format for our meetings to include some working meetings and some for public engagement. Of course, with COVID-19 we have also changed our format to virtual meetings to accommodate social distancing. We look forward to seeing our colleagues face to face as soon as it is safe.

Sincerely,

Cyndy Heslin  
Chair, Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council

## Who we are

The Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council (YEHAC) is comprised of up to 15 volunteer members who reside in the geographic [region](#) from Provost in the east to Camrose in the west. Visit us online for a full list of [membership](#).



*L-R, back: Deborah McMann, Taneen Rudyk, Sarah Hissett, John Erkelens  
L-R, front: Cyndy Heslin, Elaine Sorochan, Glenys Reeves  
Missing: Lesley Binning, Gary Duffett, Pat Johnson, Doug MacKay, Stephanie Munro*

## Highlights

### Public in Attendance

- 13 members of the public attended our meetings

### Location of Public Meetings

- Lloydminster, Wainwright & virtually

## Key achievements of 2019-20

The YEHAC has worked intentionally to contribute to building stronger relationships between the people in its communities and AHS. It has done so by having frank and open conversations about local health service delivery at its meetings with AHS and one another.

Council members attended the annual Advisory Council Fall Forum to hear a variety of presentations including learning about the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression Provincial Advisory Council (SOGIE PAC), HeartMath and Connect Care. We also participated in various breakout session that focused on wellness. Fall Forum was a great opportunity to network with fellow Council members, AHS staff and members of the AHS Board of Directors.

Some of our members belong to committees outside of the HAC that complement the work of our Council, such as:

- Primary Care Networks (PCN)
- Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP)
- Lloydminster Region Health Foundation
- Tofield and Area Health Services Foundation
- Wainwright and District Community Health Foundation
- Seniors and Continuing Care Provincial Advisory Council
- Saskatchewan Community Health Advisory Committee

In January, we participated in a joint meeting between AHS leaders and representatives from the Saskatchewan Health Authority to review and plan strategic health priorities in the border town of Lloydminster. This meeting identified key operational priorities and operational logistics and was later deferred to the Joint Operations Committee.

Throughout the year we shared Top Concerns from within our communities with the AHS Board. This helped contribute to a broad understanding of health service delivery issues across the province. Concerns shared include: addiction (increasing opioid use) and mental health (stigma; suicide prevention); access to diagnostics services; navigation and integration of services; quality of service and bed availability in seniors and continuing care; wait times to see specialists and family physicians.

At one of our meetings, a community concern was raised about long-term care sites in Vegreville. AHS has made changes as a result of this feedback by conducting more spot checks and increasing its presence at the site, as well as checking in with staff and families to hear their thoughts on the improvements.

We were invited to present to the Community Engagement Committee of the Board last May where we outlined our successes, challenges and opportunities.

## A look ahead

Council is looking forward to 2020-21. Implementation of the new direction of Health Advisory Councils (HAC 2.0) will begin in the fall, where community events will be embedded into our annual planning cycle. Events will be co-designed with AHS and will be a partnership with Zone leadership. Work is underway to determine the nature of these events.

Our meetings are focused on bringing community voices to the leaders of AHS. These voices are an essential part of our role and mandate. Council plans to continue work on the following:

- Increasing public attendance at our meetings so the information we learn from AHS can be shared more broadly;
- Recruiting members from the communities of Two Hills, Vermilion, Bashaw, Hardisty and Provost, to ensure more demographic representation. See page six for information on how to apply.

Throughout the year mental health was identified as an area of interest. To help inform local communities about available services and resources, we will theme our meetings for the coming year to focus on health and wellness. As well, we plan to build our relationship with Indigenous communities by inviting them to our meetings and attending local events hosted by Indigenous groups in the Central Zone.

*It has been a pleasure getting to know the members of the YEHAC over the last year. As a new Chief Zone Officer in the Central Zone, I have come to truly appreciate the wisdom and diversity the Health Advisory Council members bring to discussions about Health Care in the Zone. The members' deep commitment to their communities has enriched our understanding of local priorities and has helped us to build deeper, stronger and more collaborative relationships in the communities within the zone.*

Janice Stewart  
Chief Zone Officer – Central Zone

Advisory Councils act in an advisory capacity to Alberta Health Services (AHS) as we share feedback with AHS leadership from our communities about health services. We hold public meetings at locations throughout our geography and participate in engagement activities that further contribute to health services in Alberta.

## Learn more

Visit [ahs.ca/advisorycouncils](https://ahs.ca/advisorycouncils)

✉ [yellowheadeast@ahs.ca](mailto:yellowheadeast@ahs.ca)

☎ 1.877.275.8830

Check us out on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) or by searching AHS Advisory Councils.

## Get involved

You can make to the health and well-being of your family, friends, neighbours and community by sharing your thoughts and ideas with Alberta Health Services. You can get involved by:

- Attending an [upcoming meeting](#). Agendas and notices are posted on the Advisory Council webpage: [ahs.ca](https://ahs.ca)
- Delivering a presentation at a Council meeting on a health area of interest or concern
- Provide input on various health care topics online, at [Together4Health](#)
- Apply to [become a member](#). Members are appointed for three-year terms.



**Alberta Health  
Services**

Yellowhead East  
Health Advisory Council

Healthy Albertans.  
Healthy Communities.  
**Together.**