

Addiction and Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council

2021-22 Annual Report
(July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022)





Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors

It's been another remarkable year for health services in Alberta. While the COVID-19 pandemic carried on, vaccines became available which has been monumental in slowing the spread of the virus and preventing severe illness. Through it all, AHS Advisory Councils remained connected with their communities and have demonstrated an incredible spirit of volunteerism through their engagement activities.



Vicki Yellow Old Woman

Through Advisory Councils, AHS has received feedback on a number of important initiatives which are outlined in each of these reports. We are grateful for the involvement of our Councils in advising AHS on a range of matters of importance to all Albertans.

On behalf of the AHS Board, I extend my sincerest gratitude to all Advisory Council members for continuing to foster relationships with stakeholders across Alberta. These grassroots connections have been vital to AHS' ability to make well-rounded decisions on health services that impact so many of us. Your commitment is greatly appreciated and we look forward to the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Vicki Yellow Old Woman,
Chair, Community Engagement Committee, AHS Board



Message from the Chair, Addiction and Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council

The COVID -19 pandemic continues to strain our mental health. Alberta also is experiencing a drug poisoning crisis which is impacting members of our communities. Additionally, those with ongoing and chronic addiction and mental health challenges have had to navigate evolving systems to meet their needs.



Terry O'Riordan

The AMH PAC continues to contribute our diverse lived experiences and knowledge to support the Provincial Addiction and Mental Health Portfolio. Our discussions have ranged from the opioid crisis to justice and policing initiatives, to the communication and coordination of resources and programs within AHS to the diversity of communities across the province and their unique needs and challenges. These contributions speak to Council members' dedication to contributing to Alberta's Addiction and Mental Health system and supporting universal health care as a basic human right.

Sincerely,

Terry O'Riordan
Chair, Addiction and Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council



Who we are

The Addiction & Mental Health (AMH) Provincial Advisory Council (PAC) is comprised of 15 volunteer members with lived addiction and mental healthcare system experience who are passionate about improving service quality, access and availability for Albertans experiencing mental health challenges and addiction.



*Top L-R: Sandra Sjorgren, Rhonda Robinson, Terry O'Riordan, Chantel Walker, Tyla Savard
Bottom L-R: Debra Gazeley, Lindy Fors, Sandra Badry, Ed Brown, Nasra Omar
Missing: Emily Macphail*



Key achievements of 2021-22

The AMH PAC is advisory in nature and provides a way for Albertans to identify existing and emerging addiction and mental health issues from the addiction and mental health community service users' perspective. We advise AHS Board, CEO and the Executive Leadership on service delivery, system coordination, standardized program delivery approaches, policy and procedures to improve quality, access and sustainability of addiction and mental services for Albertans. We do this by demonstrating the importance of family/patient lived experience, ensuring a strong collaboration around all health care activities in the area of addiction and mental health. Our key achievements include:



Participated in a variety of COVID-19-related activities including:

- AHS review of provision of inpatient passes and privileges through COVID -19 pandemic.



Represented addiction mental health system-access perspective at tables including:

- AHS Provincial Addiction and Mental Health Core Committee
- AHS Provincial Addiction Counselling Practice Group
- AHS Provincial Youth Addiction & Mental Health Advisory Council
- Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Health System (PRIHS) VI Reducing inpatient readmission rate for patients discharged from acute psychiatric care in Alberta using peer and text message support
- Respite House for the Region
- The Healing Hub – Lloydminster
- Ad hoc group participation as requested\required.



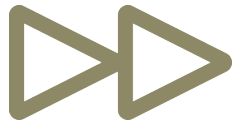
Presentations:

- Aventa Calgary Accreditation
- AHS Diversity and Inclusion



Engagement:

- Participated as a member of the AMH PAC providing lived experience in a Community Conversation with Wood Buffalo Health Advisory Council
- Adjudicated and participated in Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Health System (PRIHS) grant projects - reducing inpatient readmission rate for patients discharged from acute psychiatric care in Alberta using peer and text message support
- Participated in an EMS engagement session
- Provided input into safe drinking guidelines
- Attended North Zone COVID Update session
- Participated in a virtual session of the Edmonton Zone [Access 24/7, Adult Intake Services](#)
- Attended various Health Advisory Council meetings



A look ahead

In the coming year Council will seek to increase the perspectives it represents to best promote equity and accessibility to appropriate care settings where Albertans can have their needs met in a safe and supportive environment.

Council members will share their lived experiences with AHS to shift the narrative on addiction and mental health. Council's goal continues to be to support Albertans with mental health and addiction concerns and issues to be effectively supported in their personal journeys towards recovery by increasing access to community recovery-oriented systems of care that are easily accessible when needed.

Council will continue to participate in and provide input to AHS projects and initiatives, policy and procedures, program implementation and service design support to Addiction & Mental Health teams, endeavor to further engage and collaborate with other AHS Advisory Councils, gain insight at the community level and share to improve understanding of addiction and mental health programs and supports.

In 2022, the AMH PAC expects to recruit two new members, one from Central and one from South Zone. Interested in [applying](http://www.ahs.ca/advisorycouncils)? Visit www.ahs.ca/advisorycouncils.



Our Engagement with Addiction and Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council is essential as we seek to develop, evaluate, and improve the services we provide to Albertans. They act as key representatives of the voices of Albertans. It is a privilege to work with such a dedicated group of volunteers.

Dr. Nick Mitchell

Medical Director, AHS Provincial Addiction & Mental Health Services



AMH PAC members at the Annual Advisory Forum, May 2022
Top L-R: Tyla Savard, Ed Brown, Rhonda Robinson, Nasra Omar, Susan Blanchard
Bottom L-R: Sandra Badry, Sandra Sjogren, Sarthak Singh

Advisory Council members share advice and feedback from their communities with AHS. Councils hold public meetings and engagement activities virtually or in locations throughout their geographic area that further contribute to improving healthcare services in Alberta.



Get involved

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

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



Learn more

Visit ahs.ca/advisorycouncils

✉ pac.amh@ahs.ca

☎ 1.877.275.8830

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

