



Greater Edmonton Health Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
 Wednesday, January 17, 2024 / 6:00 pm – 9:00 p.m. / Zoom

ATTENDEES & INTRODUCTIONS	
Members	Kavis Reed (Chair), Shakib Rahman (Vice Chair), Shelley Biermanski, Towunmi (Priscilla) Coker, Donalda Farwell, Ben Gronberg, Maryana Kravtsenyuk, Noah Martin, Nazret Russon
Alberta Health Services (AHS)	Carol Anderson, Maya Atallah, Adam North Peigan, Dr. Chris Sikora, Dr. David Zygun
Regrets	Maria Melizza Carino, Floyd House, Vincent Liu, Austin Mardon, Leahann McKinnon, Andrea Petryk
Welcome, Land Acknowledgement & Introductions	Maya Atallah welcomed all in attendance. Adam North Peigan shared a prayer. Kavis Reed provided a land acknowledgment.
Approval of previous minutes	September 13, 2024, meeting minutes were approved by consensus.
STANDING ITEMS	
Action items from the previous meeting	Action items from the September 13, 2023, meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deanna to email Council members so they can decide if they want to join a What’s App group. (COMPLETE) • Deanna to email Council and determine the topic for the community engagement event on November 15. (COMPLETE)
Edmonton Zone Executive Leadership Update	Carol Anderson, Chief Zone Officer - Edmonton Zone (EZ), provided the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Alberta Surgical Initiative (ASI) remains strongly committed to enhancing and minimizing waitlists. Collaborations with primary care play a significant role, aiding in streamlining referral processes and ensuring comprehensive post-operative care for patients to support their recovery. • Recruitment of healthcare professionals extends beyond physicians to include nurses and allied health staff. Active recruitment strategies are in progress. • International nurses have recently arrived in Alberta to join the workforce. AHS is actively involved in facilitating their integration into the community and mentorship programs have been established to assist them in their transition.



- Three new continuing care sites have been opened: Gene Zwodzesky Centre at Norwood, Fort Saskatchewan Care Community and HolSome Place in Edmonton.
- [Bridge Healing Transitional Accommodation Program](#) will be introducing additional transitional beds to support individuals facing homelessness upon their release from emergency departments in Edmonton hospitals.
- AHS and the City of Edmonton, in collaboration with community partners, social agencies and those serving vulnerable populations, are working on enhancing and expanding the community care plan. The focus is on improving care pathways for homeless populations through a collaborative effort. Implementation is scheduled from April to August 2024.
- The influenza clinic is currently in progress. AHS strongly encourages everyone to get vaccinated. Additionally, the recently introduced Novavax vaccine is now available.
- Expansion to the Fort Saskatchewan Hospital pre, and post-surgical units is complete.
- AHS has initiated [clinical service planning](#) for three subzones in the Edmonton Zone – Westview; Strathcona County including Sherwood Park; and Edmonton Northeast.

Dr. David Zygun - Edmonton Zone (EZ) Medical Director, provided the following update:

- An overview of the recently unveiled healthcare plan initiated by the Government of Alberta (GOA). He outlined the plan's four key areas of focus, namely, primary care, acute care, continuing care and mental health and addiction. Under the acute care pillar, Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health and Surgical Contract Facilities will operate.
- To access more details or participate in the ongoing consultation, please visit the GOA [Refocusing health care site](#).
- Current capacity pressure challenges in emergency rooms are attributed to a substantial rise in respiratory viruses, demanding isolation measures and escalating acute care demands. He explained the patient's journey post-admission, shedding light on the existing backlogs in securing a unit bed or implementing a discharge plan with a transition to home care.

Dr. David Zygun and Carol Anderson answered questions regarding the following:

- Clarified ongoing initiatives aimed at both recruiting and retaining medical professionals. They emphasized the crucial role of community efforts highlighting that for many physicians, the choice of where to work and live is deeply intertwined with their desired lifestyle.
- Discussed recruitment strategies including targeted advertising, participation in conferences, international campaigns, collaboration with external recruitment firms and partnerships with universities and colleges.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasized the outcome of recruitment initiatives is not always immediately measurable, stressing the importance of an integrated approach with community partners to assess the impact of patient-centered care and evaluate overall outcomes. Highlighted the lengthy onboarding process for new staff underscoring the complexity of integrating not only the hired professional but also their family. This involves completing necessary paperwork for licensing and immigration.
Council Round Table	<p>The following was shared by Council members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The previous meeting featured a presentation on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) and palliative care, receiving positive feedback, and the information provided was considered valuable. Concern about the shift in the healthcare structure and the potential impact on healthcare delivery. Two members shared diverse experiences with pharmacists involving streptococcus testing. Challenge of securing a family doctor, especially for patients discharged from hospitals with instructions to follow up, despite lacking a family doctor. Appreciation and gratitude for funded public healthcare services, acknowledging positive experiences for a couple who recently had a baby. Addressed the need for educating vulnerable youth in Leduc on accessing healthcare independently when lacking support.
Action Item	Carol will inquire about the pharmacist charging for streptococcus throat testing and get back to Council.
Voices of the Community	Community members appreciate the presentation and were thankful for the transparency of the meeting discussions.
Report from the Chair	<p>Kavis Reed provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greeted new Council members and expressed gratitude to AHS staff for their ongoing support and the valuable information they consistently provide.
Advisory Council Update	Maya Atallah shared that the annual Advisory Council Satisfaction Survey is open and encouraged all members to participate. She adds that the next meeting will move from in person to virtual. More details will be sent closer to the meeting date.



NEW BUSINESS

Presentation(s)

Advancing Access to Health Care for Racialized Populations – Dr. Anna Santos Salas, Associate Professor, University of Alberta:

- Dr. Anna Santos Salas, with the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Alberta, delved into the disparities in healthcare access experienced by racialized populations in Alberta and Canada.
- She offered insights into the concepts of health equity and inequity followed by an exploration of the reasons why racialized populations often find themselves underserved. Dr. Santos Salas then scrutinized the health disparities affecting these populations and engaged in a discussion on strategies to enhance healthcare access for racialized communities.

Adam North Peigan, Advisor, Indigenous Engagement with the Indigenous Wellness Core, AHS:

- Highlighted supports available, emphasizing the Indigenous Support Line is specifically tailored for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, including youth and Elders, irrespective of their residence - whether on or off reserve, in a settlement, or in cities and towns.
- Provided information about the ceremony policy and the presence of cultural and ceremonial rooms at AHS sites. He adds that AHS extends translation services in 23 Indigenous languages to accommodate Indigenous patients and their families accessing healthcare.
- Additionally, as part of AHS’ commitment, all staff are mandated to undergo Indigenous awareness and sensitivity courses, ensuring a culturally informed approach in their interactions and services.

A very interactive question and answer period followed where all questions were answered, and resources will be shared with the group.

Action Items

Maya will share resources, and links from the presentation with all those in attendance.

Date of Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 – Community Engagement Session
 Time: 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 Location: Zoom

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.