

Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council



Annual Report 2010–2011





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Message from the Chair,

Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council

It is with a sense of accomplishment that we present the Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council Annual Report for 2010-2011. This report represents the work we accomplished in our first year of service. The Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council embraces how passionate Albertans are about health care. With a new entity driving health service delivery in our province, our council has been focused on establishing ourselves as a council and ensuring we have taken the time necessary to understand the broad expanse of what is Alberta Health Services. We have endeavoured to solidify our foundation in anticipation of engaging our communities in health care conversations.

Equally as important has been the feedback and input council has provided to Alberta Health Services on key strategic initiatives. We look forward to representing our communities and to be a strong contributing factor in making a difference through continued consultation with Alberta Health Services.

In the year ahead, we will focus our work on our communities as we look for both opportunities and areas of improvement regarding health care service delivery. We are here to help a system in need of our voice. We recognize that there are many health care issues and believe the Health Advisory Councils will have a significant impact on health care service delivery in our province.

Over the past year, we have been mindful and thankful for the support we have received from the Alberta Health Services Board, the Health Advisory Committee of the Board and the Community Engagement department for the resources and tools they have made available to us. We will continue to invest in building a strong relationship with these important health care partners.

With our first year behind us, it is our intent to continue to improve health care service delivery to our communities by proactively communicating with our provincial health care decision makers.

Sincerely,

Larry Albrecht
Chair, Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council



Message from the Chair, Alberta Health Services Board

Health Advisory Councils are an important link between Alberta Health Services and the people we serve. We can only be genuinely responsive to Albertans if we understand their needs and listen to their concerns, which include hearing directly from councils.

Health Advisory Councils were established to engage local community members to provide feedback on what is working well within the health care system, suggest areas for improvement, and identify local issues and concerns.

The inaugural year for Health Advisory Councils has been highly effective in establishing processes, connecting with Albertans across the province and building foundational relationships both with communities and the Alberta Health Services Board and Leadership. Continually nurturing these connections will enable councils to be better informed and work more effectively in bringing the voice of communities to improve health care across the province.

In the first year of operation, councils have contributed significantly to key Alberta Health Services strategic planning initiatives. Key consultations included the 2010-2015 Health Plan, Alberta Health Act, Accreditation Canada consultation, Provincial Menu, Community and Rural health planning initiatives and the Strategic Scenarios 2030 “Driving Forces Workshops” which centered around health planning for the next 20 years.

Building on these successes over the next year will provide a valuable mechanism for communication and information flow between communities and Alberta Health Services. The Alberta Health Services Board and Leadership are committed to ensuring that Health Advisory Councils are successful in their work now and into the future. Board members will continue to increase engagement opportunities with councils, and attend council meetings, engagement events and community consultations.

In closing, we would like to thank all council members past and present, for the time, effort and expertise they have dedicated to bringing the public perspective forward to improve health care planning across the province.

Sincerely,

Ken Hughes
Chair, Alberta Health Services Board



The Year in Review

Executive Summary

This report has been created for both the Alberta Health Services Board and the communities that we serve as the Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council. We are proud to present our first annual report that highlights our activities over the past year.

“Our role is to be the voice of communities, identifying gaps and bringing forward opportunities in health care service delivery to Alberta Health Services.”

As one of 12 Health Advisory Councils across the province, where all members are appointed by the Alberta Health Services Board, our role is to be the voice of communities, identifying gaps and bringing forward opportunities in health care service delivery to Alberta Health Services. The commitment to council from the Alberta Health Services Board and Alberta Health Services executive ensures there is support for council to fulfill the role.

The Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council, located in south-central Alberta, currently has 12 members. Council members come from diverse backgrounds, representative of our communities. This report summarizes our time, effort and work to date through this developmental year. It is a reflection of a collaborative effort of past and present member input and our continued commitment to the communities we serve. Regular meetings are held 6 times per year, along with informal subcommittee meetings.

Since we first convened as a council in January 2010, we have gained greater working knowledge of Alberta Health Services through presentations, discussions, facility tours, information updates, teleconferences and forums. We have also learned from liaising with Alberta Health Services on various initiatives where we were able to provide our feedback and input.

As community members and consumers of health care, we believe in the value of engagement. We know that our health care system needs our voice to be heard if we are to have the best publicly-funded, health care system in Canada.



Who We Are

The Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council was established on June 30, 2009 under section 9(4) of the Regional Health Authorities Act (1994). The Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council was established to enhance engagement between communities and Alberta Health Services. *Please see Appendix 1 for the Provincial Map.*

“We have a diverse population, some living in long-established communities and others in quickly expanding urban centres.”

The Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council area stretches from Didsbury in the north to Lake Louise in the west and continues eastward to towns such as Lomond and Hussar, and southward to Claresholm. *Please see Appendix 2 for the Council Map.*

Nestled between the foothills and the prairies, and situated in the southern part of the province, the council area boasts a unique combination of both the largest city in the province, Calgary, and an expansive rural population. Our area is diverse in landscape, industry, socio-economic status and demographics. We have a diverse population, some living in long-established communities and others in quickly expanding urban centres.

As council members, we aim to provide a voice reflective of our communities, while maintaining a connection to Alberta Health Services.

CURRENT MEMBERS	
Mr. Larry Albrecht (Chair)	Okotoks
Ms. Gloria Wilkinson (Vice Chair)	Calgary
Mr. Luis Delgado	Carseland
Ms. Carla Helder	Canmore
Ms. Carmela Hutchison	Irricana
Mr. Clark Kassian	Calgary
Ms. Debbie Posey	Claresholm
Ms. Shannon Rennie	Calgary
Ms. Sandra Robertshaw	Calgary
Mr. Joginder Sangha	Calgary
Ms. Kirsten Wallace	Calgary
PAST MEMBERS	
Mr. Ralph Levinson	Airdrie
Ms. Sandra Durrant	Calgary
Mr. David Hawkins	Priddis
Ms. Irene Pfeiffer	Okotoks



What We Do

The role of the Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council is to:

- gather information on public input regarding health, health needs and health services for the residents of the community served by the council;
- provide advice to Alberta Health Services regarding health issues, health needs and health priorities, access to health services, the promotion of health and other matters requested by Alberta Health Services; and
- promote and participate in activities that enhance the health of residents in the communities served by the council.

Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council members reflect the diversity of the communities they serve and have a broad interest in health issues, as well as the health and well-being of the communities they represent.



How We Are Accountable

Health Advisory Councils were established on November 30, 2009 under section 9(4) of the Regional Health Authorities Act (1994). The Alberta Health Services Board approved the bylaw by which the councils were established, which was then approved by the Minister of Health and Wellness. The Alberta Health Services Board appointed members to each council following a provincewide recruitment drive in September 2009. Councils act as an advisory body to Alberta Health Services according to the Council Charter and Bylaw. Council members are required to reside within the geographic area of the council to which they are appointed and serve terms of two or three years to a maximum of five years.

Councils act as an advisory body to Alberta Health Services, providing feedback from the public to support the strategic direction of Alberta Health Services. In this role, councils:

- provide feedback about what is working well in the health care system and areas for improvement;
- engage residents by talking to members of the community and advise of what they are saying about health services in their area;
- consider information provided by Alberta Health Services and identify issues or trends from a local perspective;
- provide feedback to Alberta Health Services on matters pertaining to health services and service delivery on an ongoing basis; and
- provide feedback to Alberta Health Services about strategies to further engage the community on health care delivery.



What We Have Accomplished

“In an effort to increase our understanding of health care issues, as they relate to the role of councils, we have been actively engaged with Alberta Health Services to provide feedback and advice on key strategic initiatives.”

In an effort to increase our understanding of health care issues, as they relate to the role of councils, we have been actively engaged with Alberta Health Services to provide feedback and advice on key strategic initiatives. The following is a list of these opportunities:

- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)** – In April, 2010, Alberta Health Services approached all councils with a request to provide feedback on the draft contractual provisions with EMS providers, specifically the Service & Performance Requirements for EMS Contract Service Providers in Alberta. This was in response to Alberta Health Services becoming the sole provider of emergency services across the province. Thus, there was a need to redevelop service agreements with EMS Contract Service Providers.
- **Alberta Health Act Consultations** – In June 2010, all councils were approached by Mr. Fred Horne, MLA Edmonton-Rutherford, Parliamentary Assistant to Health and Wellness and member of the Standing Committee on Health, to assist in an initiative that would help shape the Alberta Health Act.
- **Primary Care Strategy** – In June 2010, the Primary Care department of Alberta Health Services engaged councils to review the department’s draft strategy on building a Primary Care Foundation, a vision of the future for Primary Care. The Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council was proud to represent the voice of our communities at an all-day forum held in Edmonton with other key stakeholders from across the province.
- **Infection Prevention & Control** – In January 2011, the Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council was requested to participate in a focus group to discuss hand hygiene in health care settings from the perspective of patients, families and visitors.
- **Driving Forces Workshop** – In February 2011, representatives from the council participated in an all day workshop that was intended to identify key innovations to improve the health of the population and to develop quantitative and narrative scenarios to analyze the impact of projected trends on the health of Albertans.
- **Citizen Advisory Team, South Health Campus** – Council members were asked to sit on the Citizen Advisory Team to provide input into various initiatives.
- **Accreditation Canada Focus Group** – Council members participated in a focus group that provided Accreditation Canada with an external assessment of Alberta Health Services’ achievement of Standards and Required

Organizational Practices, which directly impacts Alberta Health Services in meeting or exceeding quality standards in health care delivery.

- Council members also had the opportunity to provide input on the Tobacco Policy Development and selecting a name for the Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Programs.
- The rollout of the new Provincial Menu evolved through consultation with Alberta Health Services. Changes to the program were based on community feedback and from an external review, which was invaluable during the implementation of the new menu.

What We Have Learned

In our first year, the Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council has heightened its awareness of community priorities and strengthened our connection with Alberta Health Services. The council also gained a greater understanding of our role and the processes associated with council operation.

Educating ourselves about our health care system, the various levels of services and programs, and understanding initiatives and measures taken by Alberta Health Services to adjust to the demands on our system has been paramount to our council. Other endeavours include investigating what our council area looks like in terms of demographics and population characteristics, as well as inquiring about strategies related to minority populations.

“Educating ourselves about our health care system, the various levels of services and programs, and understanding initiatives and measures taken by Alberta Health Services to adjust to the demands on our system has been paramount to our council.”

We strongly feel that by knowing who we are serving, we will set ourselves up for success and fulfill our role. Following are a few areas where we have gained greater insight:

- Seniors Health – This is without doubt an issue of growing concern across our province. This part of our health care system is a complex, multi-layered issue. Our council has requested information from Alberta Health Services regarding strategies to address our aging population, as well as those specific to Home Care and Supportive Living for seniors.
- A broader look at the complexity of how Alberta Health Services, Alberta Health & Wellness and the Ministry of Alberta Seniors & Community Supports work together was gained during these discussions. We broadened our knowledge and understanding by meeting with representatives from Carewest to gain insight into partners who work with Alberta Health Services who provide programs and services to seniors in our communities. A tour of one of their facilities will take place in 2011-2012.

- Physician Recruitment & Retention – Another area of great concern in our province is physician recruitment and retention. We met with Alberta Health Services executives to learn about recruitment facts, incentives, types of recruitment, credentials and programs currently in place to address the growing need for physician recruitment and retention.
- South Health Campus – The South Health Campus is leading the way for innovations in health care service delivery. This new facility will offer premium health care services to communities in our area. We have toured the facility and are pleased to have two of our council members sit on the South Health Campus, Citizen Advisory Team.
- Alberta Health Services Executive – Regular communication with the executive of Alberta Health Services Executive and local operations leaders ensures we remain informed of important issues facing our area.

Logistics and Process

- The past year has been one of tremendous growth as our council worked to understand our role, build relationships with Alberta Health Services, and identify our top priorities. Alberta Health Services is a large and complex organization that requires a level of understanding to provide a framework from which our council can operate.
- Learning is a two-way process. As our council continues to learn, we appreciated the dedication of Alberta Health Service employees who have worked to understand and assist our council to meet the outcomes identified in our annual Work Plan.
- As the year progressed, our council had to be realistic about how many resources we were able to dedicate to fulfill our role and meet our goals.
- Meeting six times a year was inadequate to achieve the work we wanted to accomplish. We have increased our meeting frequency to include both working committees and public meetings.
- The ability to meet with Alberta Health Services Board members has opened the channels of communication. We continue to benefit from these opportunities, ensuring we understand the expectations of the Alberta Health Services Board as we work to meet our goals.



Looking Forward

2011-2012

“We are fifteen voices strong and welcome you to bring your voice forward to join ours.”

As a council in 2011-2012 we will see benefits from the planning and processes developed in our inaugural year. We will develop our 2011-2012 Work Plan and analyze the outcomes of the work completed in 2010-2011. Our annual Work Plan will be available to view on the Alberta Health Services website, www.albertahealthservices.ca

In December 2010, Alberta Health Services announced a proposal to expand and strengthen the role of the Health Advisory Councils to provide greater engagement with Albertans. This enhanced role will see councils connecting regularly with the Alberta Health Services Board and management on strategic planning initiatives, both locally and provincially.

We look forward to networking at our second annual provincial meeting of all councils to be held in Calgary on June 10 and 11, 2011. We appreciate the opportunity to connect and build relationships with other council members from across the province, and with the Alberta Health Services Board and management.

With the information gathered, and research conducted by council throughout 2010, the Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council 2011 Work Plan will focus on the areas of seniors’ health, acute care and primary care. We appreciate the balance required to fulfill all of our desires as concerned and invested consumers of health care, while operating in a volunteer capacity. We have built many bridges over the past year, but also clearly see that having the community voice heard in a system steeped in historical and current day misfortunes and challenges means that the road ahead is not a simple one. We are fifteen voices strong and welcome you to bring your voice forward to join ours.

Our annual Work Plan will be available to view on the Alberta Health Services website www.albertahealthservices.ca/1818.asp



Contact Information 2011-2012

We welcome the opportunity to hear your voice. Please contact us at:

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Email: community.engagement@albertahealthservices.ca

Council Web Page:
www.albertahealthservices.ca/1818.asp

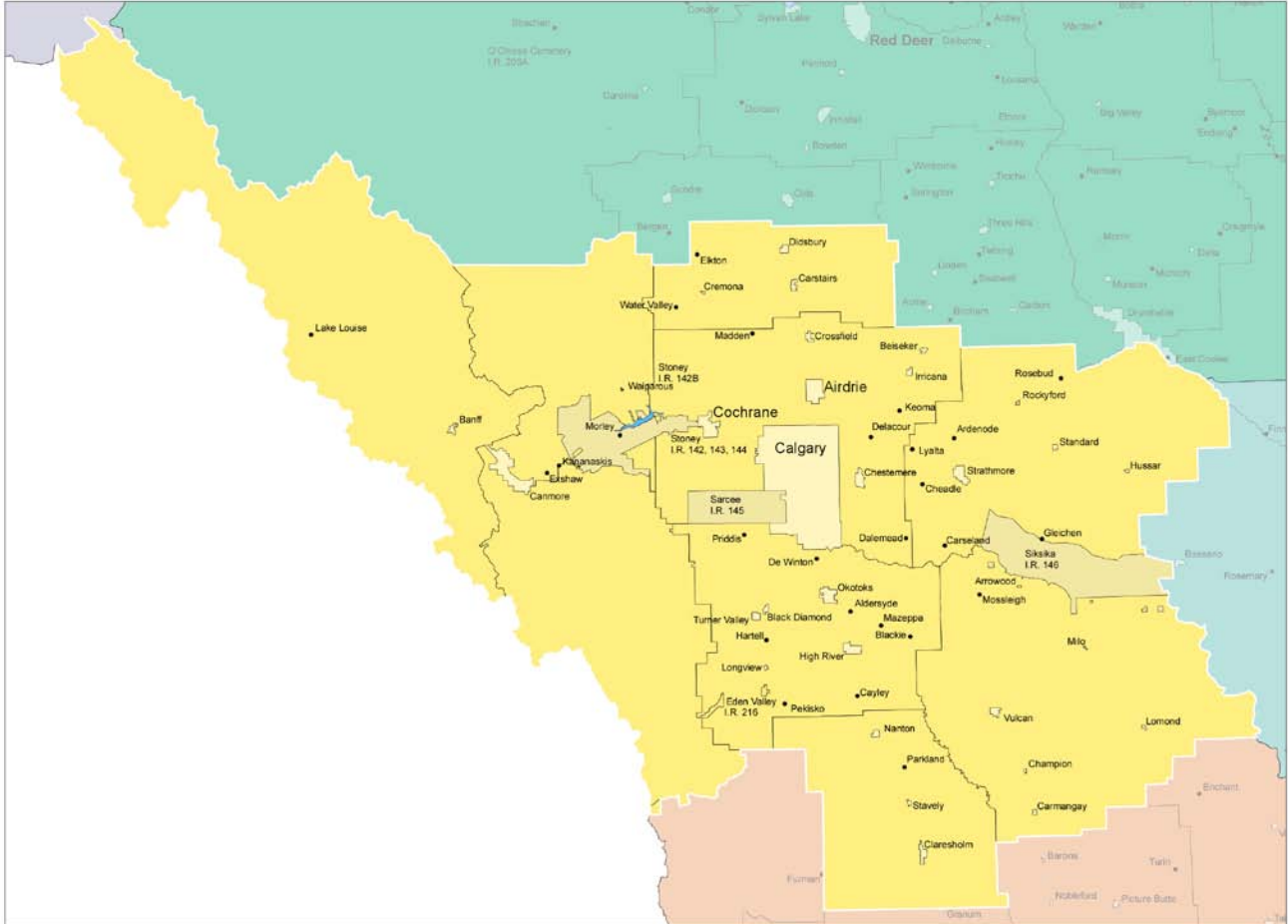
Council Email:
prairiemountain@albertahealthservices.ca




 **Appendix 1 – Provincial Map**



Appendix 2 – Council Map

Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council Map



-  City or Town
-  Indian Reserve
-  Métis Settlement

*Bringing the voice of
communities to build
a better health system*