

# Wisdom Council



## 2018-19 Annual Report



Wisdom Council

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

## Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors

Alberta Health Services values Advisory Council members as volunteers, leaders and partners in healthcare 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 healthcare system – and they advise AHS on our planning, programs and services.



*Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn*

We have 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. We hope our departing members will continue to share their advice as members of the public and share their knowledge of the healthcare system.

This year, we added 23 new members to the Advisory Council family, and we also added a new Council. We were pleased to support and nurture the development of the Sexual Orientation Gender Identity & Expression (SOGIE) Provincial Advisory Council.

Members have made many contributions in their local areas, and you'll learn more about them in this report. Here are a few general examples from across the province over the past year:

- **Evolution of the Wisdom Council:** new Terms of Reference will guide the work of the Wisdom Council and includes creation of an Elder Circle which gives an enhanced role to Elders in helping to advise AHS on programs and services to best meet the needs of Indigenous people.
- **Connect Care:** a number of members have joined the patient advisory committees.
- **Supporting more addiction and mental health services:** many Councils held information sessions and highlighted the importance of services; their efforts helped support the development of Edmonton's new Access 24/7 Addiction and Mental Health Clinic and enhance awareness on services and access.
- **Expanding relationships:** connecting with the LGBTQ2S+ community through the new SOGIE PAC, meeting with municipal leaders, and holding meetings at Métis Settlements.
- **Connecting with Albertans through [Community Conversations](#):** Health Advisory Councils partnered with AHS to host 12 events across the province, where Albertans shared their views about challenges and solutions to healthcare issues.
- **Highlighting top concerns:** based on feedback from their communities, all Councils advised us on local concerns. AHS tracks and responds to concerns at each Council meeting.
- **Participation in Community Engagement Committee of the Board meetings:** various Council Chairs joined the conversation and shared ideas.

Member satisfaction is important to us, and it was gratifying to learn through the Annual Satisfaction Survey that our members are feeling generally satisfied in their roles. They've also said there's a need for more clarity on their role, and we're listening. We have begun work on an overarching Health Advisory Council review to address some of the gaps, and to ensure all our members fully understand their role.

On behalf of the AHS Board of Directors, our leadership team, and our workforce, thank you for your passion and time. We look forward to continuing to work with you on improving healthcare for Albertans.

Sincerely,

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

## Message from Wisdom Council Chair and Vice-Chair

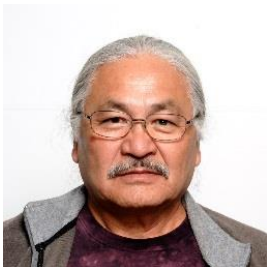
This past year has been busy with meetings, supporting and providing recommendations to Dr. Verna Yiu, President and CEO of Alberta Health Services (AHS) who continues to make strides in working toward improved health services for the Indigenous, Métis and Inuit people of Alberta.

To highlight some activities this past year are:

- Alberta Health Services continues to incorporate the Truth and Reconciliation process when addressing the disparities that exist for the Indigenous, Métis and Inuit people.
- The Wisdom Council have been involved in the discussion and planning of a new Edmonton Hospital.
- Recruitment of 12 (12) new Wisdom Council members
- Hosted a round dance, celebration and blessing ceremony for the new Edmonton Hospital.

We look forward to continuing this journey of partnership and representation with Alberta Health Services on behalf of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit people of Alberta that we serve.

In Spirit of Health and Reconciliation,



Casey Eagle Speaker (Sorrel Horse, Kainai Nation)  
Chair, Wisdom Council



Wally Sinclair (Sawridge First Nation)  
Vice-Chair, Wisdom Council

## About our Council

### 2018 -2019 Council Members

Established in 2001, the Wisdom Council continues to recruit members who comprise a rich and diverse mixture of both non Indigenous and Indigenous traditional world views. The members bring professional, clinical and educational expertise as well as the experience and sacred knowledge of Elders, to enable AHS, its' partners and other key stakeholders to continue to identify key areas of priority for action and culturally appropriate strategies to improve the health and well-being of Indigenous people.

Member	Zone	Background
Abigail (Dolly) Creighton	<i>South</i>	Dolly has been an Indigenous Liaison Worker in the South Zone and is very involved in her local community. She has a background in nursing, social work, community health, mental health therapy, community and personal growth development. She has an interest in holistic health and has completed her studies as a Master Practitioner in Psycho-somatic Therapy.
Beatrice Little Mustache	<i>South</i>	Beatrice has many years of experience in Social work and has advocated for Indigenous people in all areas of health and social issues. She is a member of the Piikani Tribe and has had the opportunity to support Indigenous people when they seek services in Pincher Creek and other area hospitals. She has developed a strong network of contacts and works hard to build awareness of the unique challenges of Indigenous people. She is keenly interested in increasing Indigenous healthcare workers across AHS.
Cassandra AYoungman	<i>Calgary</i>	Cassandra has been an EMT for the past year and has witnessed firsthand the challenges of Indigenous people. She wants to be part of the solution and to identify ways to support a decrease in diabetes and chronic disease among her people. Cassandra is a member of the Siksika First Nation.
Cheryl Sheldon	<i>South</i>	Cheryl is an Elder with the Swan River First Nation. She has worked in the education system, teaching and mentoring new teachers as they enter the system. She served as an elected public member to the University of Alberta Senate 2009-12 and 2013-16.
Connie Morin	<i>North</i>	Connie has worked in her home community for more than 30 years in the areas of health, social work and mental health. She is interested in building partnership with primary care networks and organizations that support wellness among the Indigenous population.
Calvin Badger	<i>North</i>	Calvin is a social worker by training and has worked in various capacities supporting Indigenous people since 2002. He has worked with five First Nations at the Tribal Council Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council as well as with three different Métis settlements conducting workshops and presentations.
Charles	<i>South</i>	Charles describes himself as a big fan of 'data' and has many years of experience supporting health through leadership roles. He is

Weasel Head		currently very active in helping his community cope with the opiate crisis and seeking solutions for Indigenous communities.
Carola Cunningham	<i>Central</i>	Carola Cunningham has over 40 years of experience in education, justice, community wellness, and addictions recovery. She has designed, developed and delivered programming tailored to the needs of the Indigenous community; especially those with high-risk lifestyles. Throughout her career, Carola has demonstrated dedication toward bridging cultural differences and creating understanding. This work continues in her role as CEO of Niginan Housing Ventures, an organization that designs, builds, and develops housing initiatives for Indigenous people.
Danika Littlechild	<i>Central</i>	Danika is a lawyer and consultant who would like to be more actively involved in the health sector. As a lawyer, she has worked to build linkages between Indigenous and non-Indigenous sectors and is keenly aware of barriers that could be addressed through better integration of Indigenous knowledge in the healthcare system. She has experience as a facilitator.
Donna Fayant	<i>North</i>	Donna is a registered nurse who has worked in healthcare for most of her career including in acute care facilities. She is a member of the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement. She believes in the importance of a holistic approach to healthcare and has a special interest in addressing the significant incidence of diabetes among Indigenous people.
Patsy Campbell	<i>North</i>	Patsy is a health director with the Horse Lake First Nation and is a strong believer in educating all people on the traumatic impact of residential schools. She believes knowledge is key to people understanding Indigenous people. Patsy has a particular interest in building culturally sensitive mental health and addiction supports.
Tyson Tallman	<i>South</i>	Tyson is a Blood Nitsitipii, born in Lethbridge, Alberta. He is a First Nations youth representative from the South Zone. Tyson has a passion for working in First Nations Health, and knowledge working for First Nations organizations. Tyson's goal is to advocate for First Nations youth and to find innovative ways to combine traditional knowledge with new culturally appropriate integrated approaches to health programming.
Noreen McAteer	<i>North</i>	Noreen is a Métis Elder (grandmother) from Northern Alberta who is concerned about the accessibility of health services to Indigenous people in remote areas. Noreen has been involved with the Northern Lights Health Board for a number of years. Noreen was a federal employee for 30 years in a management capacity with Canada Post and with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in her home community of Fort Vermilion, Alberta.
Casey Eagle Speaker, Chair	<i>South</i>	Casey is a Blackfoot Elder and Blood Tribe member. Over the last 20 years, Casey has acted as a cultural advisor to many Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, facilitating hundreds of presentations on pathways to wellness, identity and belonging. He is the Indigenous Resource Coordinator at Hull Services in Calgary where he provides cultural, spiritual and education supports to high-risk youth and their families. In 2000, Casey received two awards -

		the Chief David Crowchild award from the City of Calgary for his hard work in cross-cultural awareness; and the Dr. Joseph Crowshoe award from the University of Calgary for his tireless work in Indigenous Education.
Paul Daniels	<i>South</i>	Paul is an Elder (Bears paw Band), Sundance Holder, Ceremonial and Spiritual leader for the Stoney Nation. A veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces, and ordained clergy, Paul provides cultural teachings and healing to First Nations groups Canada-wide. Paul was born in Eden Valley Indian Reserve (Longview), Turner Valley. He has a son and a daughter and nine grandchildren. Paul currently resides in his home community of Morley First Nations where he believes there should be greater access and quality care for the elderly with a traditional perspective in elderly care facilities.
Frank Daniels	<i>North</i>	Frank is an Elder from Peepeekisiss, Saskatchewan who now lives in Smith, Alberta, with his partner Isabel Auger. Frank is a residential school survivor and served with the United States Special Forces, doing a single tour of duty in Vietnam. Frank and Isabel developed cultural programming within maximum security prisons in Alberta for Aboriginal inmates and they continue to share cultural teachings and Aboriginal values with young offenders.
Teresa Bear Chief	<i>Calgary</i>	Teresa is an Elder and member of the Siksika First Nation. Following more than 21 years of working with Siksika Health Services (SHS) as a leader and administrator, she now serves on the SHS Board. Teresa also worked in Northern Alberta for Syncrude Canada before returning to her home community at Siksika. She has been married for 48 years and has three adult grandchildren, one great grandson and a great granddaughter.
Wally Sinclair, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	<i>North</i>	Wally was raised in Lesser Slave Lake and is a Sawridge First Nation member. During his career, he has worked with federal, provincial and regional governments including First Nations communities, the Métis Nation of Alberta, and the Canadian Armed Forces. Presently, he is employed at a Treatment Centre as an Executive Director. He also worked as a Director, Liaison and Specialist to improve cultural competency and awareness in using strategic and collaborative approaches to address past and present challenges. He is an active member of the Commanding Officer's Aboriginal Advisory Committee "K Division" and the Chair of the Youth Justice Committee. Wally is also a provincial and national representative member of the Friendship Centres. Wally has been awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his dedicated service to his peers. Wally is still very active in sports playing baseball for Team America at the Phoenix Arizona World Old Timers Baseball Championships.

## Feedback and guidance to AHS & partners

The mandate of the Wisdom Council is to provide guidance and recommendations to AHS to facilitate the development and delivery of essential health services to meet the needs of the diverse Indigenous populations in Alberta.

This year the Wisdom Council was extremely influential in helping AHS to better understand the importance how and why there is a need to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) calls to action and United



## Priorities of our Council

- Traditional Medicine
- Education – Racism
- Service Delivery – Ronald McDonald House style housing for Indigenous Patients.
- Youth Health
- Business of conducting meetings



## Activities

- The new Wisdom Council Terms of Reference (TOR) were developed and approved by AHS in December 2018. The Chair of the Wisdom Council and AHS Indigenous leaders developed the TOR, and a new Elder Circle was created to recognize tradition with respect to Elders who are on the Council. The TOR helped create:
  - an enhanced role for Elder Circle members to act as advisors to the Health and Provincial Advisory Councils as well as other groups within AHS
  - an enhanced role for the Chair to review membership with Elder Circle members annually to allow them the opportunity to leave with dignity should they choose
  - a Vice-Chair role to provide back up to the Chair where needed and share responsibilities outside of Wisdom Council meetings
  - an approach to membership that promotes a balance between Zones, First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Indigenous youth, urban and rural representation
  - alignment with Traditional Indigenous Protocols
- 13 new members were added to Council after a significant recruitment process. The new membership reflects a high level of diversity to ensure a voice that is representative of Indigenous peoples from across Alberta, including a mix of First Nation, Métis and Inuit, on/off reserve, Métis settlements, urban, rural and youth.
- On March 1, 2019, the Wisdom Council led a Blessing Ceremony on the land where the future Edmonton hospital will be built.
- The June 2018 Wisdom Council meeting was held during National Indigenous People's Week. Council members participated in an event at the Royal Alex and visited/toured the Aboriginal Wellness Clinic located onsite. In addition, members participated in events across Alberta during the month of June.
- In addition to the regularly scheduled Wisdom Council meetings, the members elevated their presence and guidance throughout the year at a number of important events and gatherings:
  - Alberta/Saskatchewan Knowledge Sharing Day
  - Medical Affairs Indigenous Planning Session
  - Annual AHS Advisory Council Fall Forum
  - Advisory Council of Chairs
- Over the past year the Council provided guidance to AHS and its partners on a number of strategies, programs, services, research and other initiatives aimed at improving the health and well-being of Indigenous people. The Wisdom Council will continue to:
  - elevate Indigenous health in a culturally appropriate and safe manner
  - ensure the advancement of traditional practices act as a foundation within AHS practices
  - advocate for the needs of Indigenous peoples across Alberta
  - influence decision makers on the path that needs to be taken as AHS strives towards reconciliation in a meaningful and lasting way



## Listening to our communities and sharing feedback with AHS

- Through the year Council members had presentations and provided feedback on the following:
  - Work of the Indigenous Health Program
  - The Guide Book for Continuing Care for Indigenous Communities
  - Strategic Clinical Networks
  - The legalization of Cannabis
  - Traditional Indigenous Protocols
  - Diversity and inclusion
  - New Edmonton hospital
  - Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infections
  - Emergency SCN Indigenous Signage Pilot Project
  - Awasisack Indigenous Health Program- Stollery Children's Hospital
  - Indigenous Patient Concern Process

## A look ahead

The Wisdom Council will continue to provide guidance to increase cultural competency and to improve access to culturally competent care for the Indigenous people of Alberta.

The Wisdom Council will continue to provide feedback and advice to Alberta Health Services to improve healthcare delivery and integration of services for Indigenous people.



# Learn more

- Visit [ahs.ca/advisorycouncils](https://ahs.ca/advisorycouncils)
- Email [community.engagement@ahs.ca](mailto:community.engagement@ahs.ca)
- Check out our Twitter and Facebook accounts, by searching AHS Advisory Councils

# 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 through one of our Advisory Councils. You can get involved by:

- Attending an upcoming meeting. Agendas and notices are posted on the Advisory Council webpage: [ahs.ca/advisorycouncils](https://ahs.ca/advisorycouncils)
- Delivering a presentation at a Council meeting on a health area of interest or concern.
- Volunteering your time as a Council member.

For more information about the Wisdom Council and all Advisory Councils, [visit ahs.ca/advisorycouncils](https://ahs.ca/advisorycouncils)

