

Kenneth King Division 7

Doctor Attraction and Retention Task Force

November 29, 2023

The clinic continues their efforts to recruit new doctors to come and serve residents of the Kneehill County area. Recently there was a doctor who had indicated she was coming to work in the clinic here, only to withdraw at the last moment and take a position in British Columbia. They are currently in discussions with other possible candidates.

There was another doctor who was here November 30th for a site visit, and I want to thank Councilor Cunningham for the able assistance provided to Councillor Kirk (Three Hills) in touring the prospective doctor around the community.

The doctors within the Kneehill Medical Clinic are feeling the pressures of recruitment and the inability to keep doctors long term.

Additionally acquiring doctors to cover locums is getting increasingly difficult, and the possibility of emergency room closures is real.

With doctors potentially leaving and with practice reductions, the difficulty of covering clinic and emergency room is increasing.

Starland, Wheatland, Special Areas, Kneehill, Town of Drumheller Mayor/Reeves Meeting

November 29, 2023

I participated in a preliminary discussion with Mayor Colberg of Drumheller to discuss possible funding of recreation operating shortfalls being experienced in Drumheller.

The result of the discussion was to have Drumheller provide additional information through the CAO to the CAOs of the other four municipalities on what Drumheller's cost shortfalls are and to outline what Drumheller is requesting in terms of assistance. No commitment was made beyond being prepared to listen to Drumheller's request once they outline exactly what the request looks like.

We do have an ICF with Drumheller, but none of the service agreements have been worked out. We have been waiting for Drumheller to initiate those discussions and it appears as if that may be what is happening on the recreation front.

David Thompson Yellowhead East Health Regions Seniors and Long-Term Care Discussion



December 7, 2023

Discussion was varied and covered topics like Long Term Care Placement Process, the Senior's and Continuing Care Provincial Advisory Council, Healthy Aging Alberta, and Dementia Friendly Communities.

Information is available at:

Continuing Care Access @ 1-855-371-4122

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/pf/cc/if-pc-cc.moving-to-a-new-home-in-continuing-care.pdf>

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/cc/page15328.aspx>

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/about/ac/ahs-pac-scc-brochure.pdf>

<https://calgaryunitedway.org/healthy-aging-alberta/>

<https://findingbalancealberta.ca/>

<https://www.dementiafriendlyalberta.ca/>

Three Hills Health Initiative's Winter Wonderland Gala

December 9, 2023

I enjoyed the evening with the Three Hills Health Initiative at their Winter Wonderland Gala fundraiser. The volunteers and Health Initiative did an amazing job of providing an entertaining evening, dinner, and fund-raising auction. The community support for our local hospital and its staff and doctors was very evident throughout the evening. Both Ruth and I were pleased to be able to attend and we would like to extend our thanks and congratulations to the Three Hills Health Initiative for a job extremely well done.

Central Zone Community Attraction and Retention Committee

Discussion with Dr. Jennifer Bestard

December 11, 2023

I participated in a discussion with AHS and the Mayors, Reeves and Chairs of local Attraction and Retention Committees to begin a discussion on finding a way forward to retaining doctors within our communities.

The startling statistic is that the long-term retention rate of doctors, past 3 – 5 years, is only 15% and the success rate of recruitment is high, but retention rate is low. The AHS Central Zone Recruitment team has brought a total of 70 new physicians to the Central Zone since March 2023.

The cost to recruit a doctor is \$70,000 to sponsor the international doctor's 6-month evaluation by the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Alberta (CPSA). Currently only AHS can bring international doctors to Alberta, the process requires a work permit from the Canadian government and matching the doctor with a supervising physician already practicing and approved as a supervisor by CPSA.



International doctors that are recruited sign a 5-year contract with AHS for service in the community they are recruited for, however, if during their contract they pass the Canadian exams required to continue to practice in Alberta/Canada, they can then move on/buy out their contract and change locations.

Once the effort to recruit a doctor is made and the doctor chooses a community in which to work, and they pass their evaluations, most do not settle in with their families in the community that they have chosen. They chose instead to commute from larger centers to the community in which they practice. The reasons are many for why doctor's families settle in larger centers, including employment for the doctor's spouse/family, the access to other amenities, education opportunities, or just failure to connect and be involved in their small new community, and many others.

There was lots of discussion on how communities can reach out to the new doctors and assist them in settling into their new community. There is lots of frustration with the settlement process and the inability to retain the doctor for longer terms.

Kenneth King
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Kneehill County

