



HEALTH COALITION

OF ALBERTA

Health Coalition of Alberta Society
Annual Report 2016



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About the Health Coalition of Alberta Society

The Health Coalition of Alberta started in 2006 as an alliance of over 60 health charities, non-profit organizations and individuals with common health issues and concerns. This alliance became Creating Synergy Health Coalition of Alberta in 2008 and established its vision, mission, goals and strategic plan, which were supported in the transition to our current Society in June 2014.

The Health Coalition has nearly 75 voluntary health sector organizations, consumer groups and individuals committed to working together and advocating with a united voice for better access to optimal health care for all Albertans.

Primary initiatives of the Health Coalition include advocacy on key healthcare access issues, education of members and the public, and awareness regarding healthcare reform decisions and service changes which could impact Albertans, and particularly patients in their care pathways and health outcomes. We envision a healthcare system which is available with equal and equitable access by all Albertans regardless of condition or disability, age, income status and geographic location. We also want a system that is universal, people-centered, evaluated as being effective and efficient, timely and transparent. More information about the Health Coalition and our efforts can be found at www.healthcoalitionab.ca.

A voluntary board is elected by the membership and governs the Society. The membership gives direction to the board to develop policy position papers on specific health or health system issues through discussions at annual Forums and through ongoing interaction.

Our MANDATE

The mandate of the Health Coalition of Alberta Society is to advocate for people-centered health care in Alberta. Through the strength of our membership we will be consulted with, and listened to, when decisions are made that impact the health of Albertans.

Our PRINCIPLES - Values We Collectively Share:

- A. Commitment to the public good and public benefit
- B. Integrity and Honesty
- C. Respect for all stakeholders
- D. Commitment to accountability and good governance
- E. Dedication to the pursuit of quality health care

Through ongoing engagement of our membership in activities that align with our mandate and principles the Health Coalition of Alberta Society is able to bring the voice of patients and their caregivers to represent our positions on common health and healthcare issues.

Together we will achieve our vision of the *best people-centered health care for all Albertans*.

*Working together with you...
for the best people-centered health care for all Albertans*



2016 Board of Directors

President

Katharina (Kathy) Kovacs Burns



Kathy has been a volunteer and Board Director with various health charities and non-profit organizations locally, nationally and internationally for the past 30 years (i.e. Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada, Canadian Coalition of Canada, Health Coalition of Alberta formerly Creating Synergy, Patients for Patient Safety Canada, and International Alliance of Patient Organizations). Her passion has been advocating with patients/families and community groups regarding healthcare issues and policies. She is also very active in promoting patient/family and stakeholder engagement in developing policy position papers, advocacy, health and clinical research and other related initiatives.

Complementing her volunteer interests is her professional work in policy analysis, research and teaching within government, universities, health systems (Alberta Health Services, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care) and community organizations. She has expertise evaluating the impact of programs or initiatives as well as health services and policy decisions. Specifically, she is interested in the barriers and enablers of program, service and policy decisions and their impact on the quality of life of patients and the public. As Senior Manager within Alberta Health Services, she works at facilitating the engagement of medical staff, other health professionals, patients and their families, and decision makers in practicing and measuring quality and safety, and in advising on policies and research, within our health care system and as part of program and service delivery.

Vice President & Membership Chair

Bruce West



Bruce West is a continuing care advocate. He retired in October 2013 after five years as Executive Director of the Alberta Continuing Care Association (ACCA), a voluntary, non-profit advocacy organization that represents the owners and operators of long term care and supportive living facilities, and the providers of home care and home support services throughout Alberta. Prior to his time with the ACCA Bruce had a 30-year career with the Government of Alberta where he held a number of senior management positions related to Alberta's housing and continuing care systems. Bruce has particular interests in promoting high quality and sustainable seniors housing, health care and continuing care to enhance the quality of life of Albertans.



**Treasurer
Mary Chibuk**



Mary has been a long time health care advocate, both on a personal and professional level, working with children with disabilities, in cardiac care, persons with Parkinson's, and cancer care. Experienced in non-profit management she has served on numerous Boards and been an Executive Director and has been a member of the Health Coalition of Alberta (Creating Synergy) as a volunteer since the beginning. As a long-time member of Girl Guides of Canada she also serves as the Alberta provincial fund development grants coordinator.

**Advocacy Committee Chair
Angeline Webb**



Angeline Webb is Director of Health Policy and Health Promotion with the Canadian Cancer Society, Alberta/NWT Division, where she has been engaged in health policy advocacy and health promotion for the last 13 years. She develops, implements, and administers public health advocacy, health policy development programming and health promotion programming for the Canadian Cancer Society in Alberta, the Northwest Territories and at the federal level. Angeline's focus is healthy public policy and chronic disease prevention with most of her attention devoted to tobacco reduction policy development.

**Nomination Committee Chair
Tom Perkins**



My name is Tom Perkins, B.Ed.
I taught Special Education students for 27 years.
I am one of the original directors of the Alberta Porphyria Society, now the Canadian Association for Porphyria.



Member-at-Large Kathy Watson



Kathy joined the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada in 2012 as the Manager of Government Relations.

Her responsibilities with the NHPC focus on advocacy to governments on the behalf of NHPC members in the areas of municipal bylaws, provincial and territorial programs, taxation, and regulation. Kathy's work provides facts on complementary and alternative health to decision-makers whose policies, laws, and legislation impact the livelihoods, opportunities, and work environments of NHPC members.

Kathy's work experience includes many years in senior positions — most of which involved working as an advocate. Her background also includes owning and managing businesses, managing government relationships for corporate and not-for-profit organizations, and politics. Kathy has a long history of sitting on nationally active boards, including the Canadian Capital Cities Organization, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the National Association for Municipal and Aboriginal Relations.

Kathy was on City Council for nine years and was Mayor of Whitehorse for six of those years. During her time in public office she represented the city and territory as the guest of Premier MacDonald on trade missions to the United States and with Prime Minister Jean Chrétien on the Team Canada Trade Mission to Japan.

In her personal life, Kathy spends as much time possible with her three children and their families — which include six grandchildren. Kathy is very close to her family and always has at least "one more story" about her little ones.

Member-at-Large Fraser Hall



Fraser Hall is a Services Specialist a for Muscular Dystrophy Canada for Northern Alberta. In that role he supports individuals and their families who are affected by neuromuscular disorders, by helping navigate health care systems, community supports, recreation opportunities and financial aid. He also advocates for patient rights, caregiver supports and accessibility issues. He also has a background working with individuals with special needs and outdoor Education.



PRESIDENT’S REPORT

I am pleased to present this President’s report of 2016 highlights/achievements and ongoing priorities for 2017 to the members of the Health Coalition of Alberta Society.

I would like to begin by thanking you as our members for your support this past year as we underwent transitioning with the refresh of our four-year Strategic plan. We presented this plan to you this past year and are providing you with our final 2016-2020 Strategic Plan which will guide our actions or activity planning, and of course our budget planning.

We would also like to thank our funders and sponsors for their ongoing support of our initiatives this past year. We certainly also acknowledge funders from 2015 as much of their support carried over into 2016. Our funders included:

| Funding/Support for 2016 | Funding/Support for 2015 |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Astra Zeneca | Astra Zeneca |
| Janssen | Janssen |
| Alberta Innovates | Novartis |
| Hospira | Novo Nordisk |
| Pfizer | Pfizer |
| Novartis | Rx&D (now Innovative Medicines Canada) |
| Membership | Sanofi |
| | Membership |

We appreciate our members and funders standing by us and supporting or contributing to the various initiatives and work of the Health Coalition. The Board of Directors and I look forward to continuing working with you and strengthening our collaboration and work on advocacy, education, membership, and other initiatives that are part of our Strategic Plan priorities.

As part of the previous strategic plan, we worked with our membership and other partners (Best Medicines Coalition, and International Alliance of Patient Organizations) to identify and confirm some key measures for us to evaluate our health care system, access to health care services and supports (specifically for Primary Care and Continuing Care), and our drug programs, plans and pharmaceutical policies. Our advocacy initiatives continue to be based on the common issues and needs of the Coalition members. We further aligned with members and community partners to identify additional areas we needed to pursue and to collaborate with others to work on these areas of interest including the Caregivers of Alberta, Mental Health Alliance and other groups. These initiatives became part of our Strategic Plan, along with others aligned with each of the four core strategies of our plan, as follows:



Advocacy and Public Policy Development

Pharmaceutical Policy Issues

- Finalization of key indicators, measures and survey questions for drug coverage and pharmaceutical policies/strategies;
- Ongoing discussions with external stakeholders on a few topics –
 - Discussion of **biosimilars and biologics** – this is ongoing. We will be engaging our members in the discussions and positions we take on this topic for the remainder of 2017 and into 2018.
 - Discussions continue regarding **Off-label drug use** and other related policy issues – We presented a letter reflecting our position to CADTH and other stakeholders on this topic entitled: ‘*Health Coalition of Alberta Society Response to Draft CADTH Report on Therapeutic Review Recommendation of Anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) drugs for the treatment of retinal conditions*’.
 - **Fall 2016 - Biosimilars survey for members** – to determine awareness and knowledge or experiences. This initiative will continue into 2017.
 - Began discussions on opioids, medical marijuana, and other topics.

Primary and Continuing Care Policy Issues

- Developing and confirming patient indicators and measures for our position paper entitled *Examining Our Current Availability and Access to Health Care in Alberta: Focusing on Primary Health Care and Continuing Care*
- Discussions on the position paper and indicators for measuring patient and family experiences will continue with membership and key stakeholders through 2017.

Other Advocacy Areas:

- Caregiver initiative – **Improving Job-Protected Leave for Family Caregivers** position paper developed by Canadian Cancer Society was supported by the Health Coalition. This advocacy campaign continues.
- **Self-care products consultations and review with Health Canada** – as part of consultations on self-care products, we engaged in webinar discussions and provided our online response to identified questions.
- We also provided a letter response to Health Canada’s request for feedback on their strategic plan – our response was entitled ‘*Health Coalition of Alberta Response to Health Products and Food Branch, Health Canada Draft Strategic Plan 2016-2021*’.
- **2016 Forum with focus on Mental Health** – Mental Health Alliance and others expressed interest in developing a position paper and education sessions with stakeholders. We were asked to form an advisory committee of stakeholders to pursue work in this area – this initiative has yet to be started.

Organizational Capacity Building

- Coalition member and Board member recruitment is ongoing.
- Meetings and liaison with external stakeholders continue.
- Website reconstruction continues – expertise in interactive websites was identified as a high priority.



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Communications & Public Awareness

- **Surveys with members in 2015 regarding priorities and issues** was used as a basis for identifying priorities and activities for our strategic planning for 2016-2020. Additional survey results from the healthcare experience evaluation pilot in 2016 will be used to raise awareness of ongoing issues in healthcare system and with drug programs and plans.
- **Through 2015 Fall MLA Breakfast and Forum** discussions, we continued to reach out to MLAs and MPs in 2016 and met with Associate Minister of Health.

Financial Sustainability

- Meetings and funding requests continue with our funders/sponsors
- We continued trying to diversify our funding (e.g. successful Community Engagement Grant)

At the start of 2017, the Coalition encountered further transitioning with a new Executive Director. The Board members and I thanked Bill Gaudette for his work and contributions through 2015 and 2016. We now look forward to working with our new Executive Director, Beth Kidd.

We also look forward to working with each and every one of our members on our strategic priorities for this next year. We welcome your input, suggestions and active participation in our working committees and Board initiatives during the remaining months of this coming year and into the next.

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy Burns', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Katharina (Kathy) Kovacs Burns, MSc, MHSA, PhD
President



TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to present the Health Coalition Treasurer's Report for the 2016 fiscal year.

Financial statements for 2016 will be shared with members at the AGM.

Mary Chibuk, MSc
Treasurer & Board Director