

ZONE NEWS

SOUTH ZONE



YOUR HEALTH CARE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

2013 FEBRUARY



“
WHEELCHAIRS ARE A CONSTANT CRITICAL PIECE OF EQUIPMENT IN THE HOSPITAL
— Ryan Thomson

HOT WHEELS!

Photo by Sherri Gallant |

Patients use wheelchairs at Chinook Regional Hospital to move about inside the facility while they recover and to get safely to a waiting car when they're discharged. On this day, the two men responsible for the newest batch of hot wheels at CRH had fun racing them in the hospital's hallways. Ryan Thomson, Site Manager, Chinook Regional Hospital, left, and Tony Jung, Executive Director, Friends of Chinook Regional Hospital, tied at the finish line.

PAGE 5

GET BACK ON TRACK WITH BALANCING ACT

Feeling out of shape? Stressed? As though you're out of sync? Yoga could help. A practice that has been refined for more than 5,000 years, yoga helps keep mind, body and spirit in balance. We take a look at five good-karma reasons to give yoga a go.

PAGE 6



PRESCRIBING A DOSE OF GOOD INFORMATION

Student pharmacists at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital do more than learn from their experiences. They also teach patients about their medications. It's a win-win prescription – easing the workload for medical staff, adding to student knowledge and, best of all, keeping patients informed.

PAGE 3

INFLUENZA: IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO GET IMMUNIZED

I'd like to extend my thanks to all Albertans who have helped us meet the seasonal surge in influenza. As you know, it has hit our communities – and health care system, including emergency departments – hard. Thank you for your support – and thanks to all of our care providers – as we work to ease pressures on the system.

I'd also like to thank everyone who has taken the time to get immunized. By getting the flu shot, washing your hands regularly, and knowing your health care options if you do get sick, you're helping your family, community and the health care system.

Because flu season comes around every year, we often forget that this can be a very serious illness. In

DR. CHRIS EAGLE
Alberta Health Services
President and CEO



fact, it is estimated that more than 4,000 people in Canada will die from influenza this year.

The good news? Each of us has the ability to prevent such tragedy, right here in our own communities. You can personally make a difference. Immunization is the single, most effective means of preventing influenza, and reducing the spread of illness in our communities.

Last season, more than 830,000 Albertans got immunized. That was good, but I know we can

do better and it's not too late. Get immunized and encourage others to do the same. More immunizations mean fewer people in hospital emergency departments, shorter wait times for health services, fewer sick days at work and school, and healthier communities.

When you get the flu shot, everybody wins.

Immunization will continue to be offered, free of charge, to all Albertans aged six months and older, through the end of March. For clinic locations and details, visit www.albertahealthservices.ca/influenza.asp, call Health Link Alberta at 1.866.408.LINK (5465), or contact your physician and local pharmacist to inquire about availability. ■



DR. VANESSA MACLEAN
Medical Director
South Zone



SEAN CHILTON
Senior Vice-President
South Zone

PLEASE DO YOUR PART TO HELP US HELP YOU

As with past years, the start of influenza season is upon us and we are seeing more influenza-like and gastro-intestinal-type illnesses circulating in our communities. This is contributing to capacity pressures at hospitals across South Zone.

Illness outbreaks in continuing care facilities and in some hospital units limits flexibility in managing hospital capacity. We can't transfer patients to facilities or units experiencing outbreaks, so patients may have to stay in hospital longer.

During influenza season, Medicine Hat and Chinook Regional Hospitals have experienced high patient volumes; the same is also true for rural facilities within the South Zone.

We are not at a stage where other services are impacted by these high volumes and our focus continues to be to provide the best possible access to health care services. Our teams work very hard to manage our capacity issues, to ensure patients receive the right care, in the right place and at the right time.

Residents of the South Zone and all Albertans can assist by ensuring they have received their influenza immunization and knowing their care options. It is key that we all play a role in protecting ourselves from illness as well as preventing its spread.

Please remember that some health and medical needs – including the management of many seasonal illnesses – can be best met at places other than a hospital emergency department.

In addition to family doctors, walk-in clinics and urgent care centres, most cases of influenza-like illnesses can be managed at home, through self care.

Staying home when sick, getting plenty of rest, and maintaining fluid intake to prevent dehydration, are not only sufficient self-care measures – for many cases, they are measures that reduce the risk of spreading illness to others, and reduce the pressure on the health care system.

Emergency departments (EDs) will never turn away those who need treatment. Albertans can educate themselves on the options available for their care to ensure they get the care they need quickly and also to help reduce the pressures on our EDs during this season. If you are unsure of your treatment options, call Health Link Alberta for advice on seeking appropriate medical care or visit www.albertahealthservices.ca/options.

If you or anyone in your household are experiencing illness, please refrain from visiting loved ones or friends in hospitals, care facilities or seniors' lodges. By simply staying home and taking care of yourself, you help ease the pressure on EDs.

Influenza immunization is the best way to protect yourself, your family and your community. The influenza vaccine is still available, free of charge, to all Albertans six months of age and older.

For clinic locations and details, call Health Link Alberta at 1.866.408.5465, or visit www.albertahealthservices.ca/immunization. ■

TEACHING ABCs OF EMS

Story by Sherri Gallant | Photo by Lisa Squires

As a youth growing up in High Prairie, Sandy Halldorson thought he might like to be a teacher some day.

His career path veered away from that plan, but eventually being a mentor did wend its way into his work with Alberta Health Services (AHS).

"I had a lot of really good teachers and I think they all really inspired me," recalls Halldorson, Executive Director of Emergency Medical Services operations for the South Zone.

Based in Medicine Hat, he is responsible for delivery of ground ambulance service in the zone.

"I found teachers' connections with students so interesting. I find that even now when I go to awards nights with my kids and teachers get up to speak about their students – how strongly they feel

Sandy Halldorson is a class act who believes in mentoring his fellow health care workers

about their responsibility to mould these individuals. They're so passionate about what they do. That opportunity to help develop individuals was what attracted me to that kind of work.

"And I think that's what I find so interesting, and keeps me going in my role today, is helping to develop people who work for me.

"That's a big part, I believe, of leadership – developing the people who come after you."

Halldorson took a year off after high school to ponder his options. After working in some local eateries, he landed a job in the kitchen at the High Prairie hospital, where he heard about an opening for an ambulance driver in the town. He already had all the qualifications – a driver's licence, First Aid and CPR training – and he got the job.

At first, he envisioned sticking with it for a year or so, but it wasn't long before the work got under his skin. He became an EMT in 1987 and graduated in 1991 from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology as a paramedic.

"As they say, the rest is history," says Halldorson.

His wife Bobbi is a nurse at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital and they have three children – Ashleigh, recently accepted to the nursing program at Medicine Hat College; Melissa, a Grade 10 student; and Quinn, who's in Grade 8. ■



THAT'S A BIG PART, I BELIEVE, OF LEADERSHIP – DEVELOPING THE PEOPLE WHO COME AFTER YOU

– Sandy Halldorson, South Zone Executive Director of EMS operations

GET THE CARE YOU NEED WHEN YOU NEED IT

- + Health Link Alberta
- + Family Doctor
- + Urgent Care Centre
- + Ambulatory Care Clinic
- + Emergency
- + Walk-In Clinic
- + Community Health Centre



albertahealthservices.ca/options





“IT’S REALLY REWARDING. WE GOT TO GO ON ROUNDS AND SEE WHICH PATIENTS NEEDED HELP WITH MEDICATIONS

– Victor Leung, student pharmacist

Patient Gordon Wunsch receives medication counselling from fourth-year student pharmacist Joanna Cebula.

PERFECT PRESCRIPTION! Student pharmacists make the rounds at hospitals, teaching patients about their medications

Story and photos by Lisa Squires |

In high school, Joanna Cebula knew she wanted a career in health care. She loved biology and chemistry, but wanted a profession that matched her lifestyle and future goals.

“Nursing? I didn’t really want to poke people,” jokes Cebula, a fourth-year University of Alberta (U of A) student pharmacist, adding that physician schedules can make juggling family life difficult.

“Pharmacy provided an equal balance. I wanted to help people and was interested in medications and how they can help.”

Cebula is one of three student pharmacists from the U of A who recently participated in an eight-week placement at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital that began in mid-October. The placements are the result of a partnership with pharmacy faculties in Alberta and Saskatchewan that provides students with hands-on learning in both community and acute care settings.

Student pharmacists are paired with preceptors, like Joyce Nishi, Pharmacy Clinical Practice Leader at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital. Preceptors are pharmacists who supervise and mentor the students during their rotations, and who assess and evaluate the students’ overall performance.

With Nishi’s support, the students joined the medical team to provide patients with bedside counselling and medication assessment. The procedure helps ensure patients have been prescribed the correct medications and understand how to take them appropriately.

“It’s really rewarding. We got to go on rounds and see which patients needed help with

medications,” says student pharmacist Victor Leung, adding that he really appreciated support from the nursing staff. “The nurses know the patients. They’re with them 24/7 and are a great resource for us.”

Sheila Burkart, nursing manager, says the nurses are equally appreciative of the dedicated teaching student pharmacists provide to patients. The result: happier patients who better understand their discharge plans, less follow-up from community pharmacists saying patients are confused about their medications, and happier staff who know patients are well looked-after.

“It’s so rewarding to see how we’re all working

together to provide the best care possible,” says Burkart.

Student pharmacist Cheryl Lin agrees.

“I had more exposure to speak with patients,” says Lin. “We reviewed medications with them to make sure they were appropriate. We make sure we use simple language, visual aids and analogies. We ask open-ended questions to make sure they really understand.”

And what do patients think about all this attention?

Gordon Wunsch says he’s loving it.

“They’ve been really helpful and thorough – just what a patient needs.” ■



Student pharmacists receive support from preceptor Joyce Nishi, a clinical leader who is mentoring, supervising and evaluating them during rotations. From left: student Joanna Cebula, preceptor Joyce Nishi, and students Cheryl Lin and Victor Leung.

SCREEN A STROKE OF GENIUS

Brooks and area stroke patients just got a huge boost toward their care: telehealth services that allow physicians at the Brooks Health Centre to speak with a Calgary neurologist the moment a stroke patient arrives. Result? Better care, faster, and close to home

Story by Tom Olsen | Photo by Rachel Boekel

It's referred to as the 'Golden Hour,' the time when treatment is most crucial for a person who has had a stroke.

"Stroke causes the death of brain tissue in the area of the brain in which it is happening," says Leona Ferguson, director of rural facilities-east, for Alberta Health Services (AHS) South Zone. "The quicker you can get to diagnosis and treatment, the better the chance of survival and recovery.

"We talk about the Golden Hour, which is that hour starting from the time somebody is showing symptoms. The quicker diagnosis and treatment takes place, the quicker damage can be stopped."

The Brooks Health Centre will soon be deemed a Stroke

Centre, with the introduction of telehealth services for health care providers dealing with stroke patients.

The centre serves communities including Tilley, Duchess and Rosemary, as well as most of the County of Newell.

To date, anyone showing symptoms of a stroke in the Brooks area is taken by ambulance to hospital in Calgary or Medicine Hat. Now, with the introduction of telehealth services for stroke, diagnosis can be done at the Brooks Health Centre. Treatment can be started, and decisions made whether the patient should continue to a larger hospital, or receive care in Brooks.

"We have a CT (computed tomography)

scanner, and images of the head can

Dr. Tim Watson learns the ropes with telehealth equipment during a recent training session at Brooks Health Centre.

be taken in Brooks by the diagnostic imaging staff, then transmitted by videoconferencing capabilities to a neurologist in Calgary," says Ferguson. "Telehealth conferencing will be set up in the emergency department, and will allow our staff to have a real-time discussion with the on-call neurologist.

"The plan of care will be a joint decision between the doctor and the nursing staff here, and the neurologist in Calgary."

To that end, Brooks personnel will be attending enhanced training in recognizing and treating stroke.

There are two common types of stroke, ischemic (clots) or hemorrhagic (brain bleeds).

"If it's a clot, drugs are administered and the patient then will be transferred to Calgary

for further assessment by neurologists," says Ferguson.

It is estimated that annually there are between 12 and 15 patients in the Brooks area who could benefit from this care.

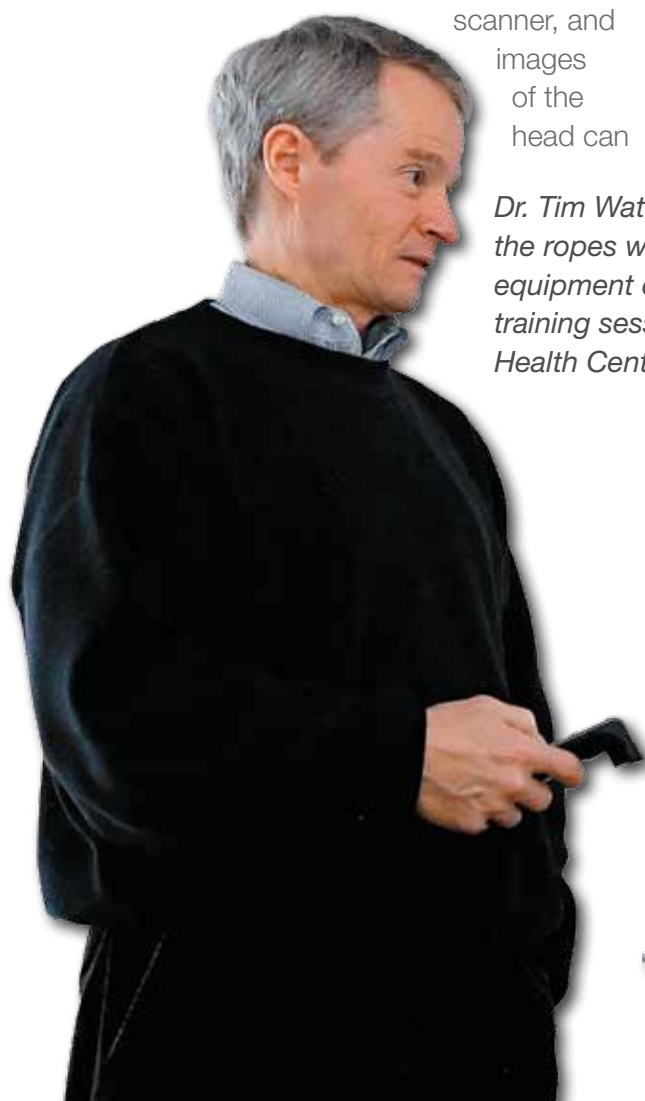
"This new service is good for the patient and the patient's family, who will have responsive assessment and treatment quickly without having to leave their home community," says Ferguson. "It's also an excellent way to connect with Stroke Services in the city, and a wise use of the expertise of the neurologists who live and work in Calgary."

Ferguson says the health care team is excited about being designated a Stroke Centre, which will increase care options for the community.

"Brooks is a busy health centre, where we are pleased to provide services such as these to our community. We're never shy about working to improve our service." ■

**TELEHEALTH
CONFERENCING WILL
... ALLOW OUR STAFF
TO HAVE A REAL-TIME
DISCUSSION WITH THE
ON-CALL NEUROLOGIST**

— Leona Ferguson, AHS director of rural facilities-east, South Zone



SERVICES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

NUTRITION SERVICES

Learn about nutrition. Find out about what children should eat to grow up healthy, how to feed a child with food allergies, and what to do with a picky eater. Receive guidance on infant feeding, such as how and when to introduce solid foods and new textures. For adults, group classes, presentations on general nutrition, and grocery store tours are available. For more information, contact the Medicine Hat Community Health Centre at 403.502.8200.

PRENATAL EDUCATION

Alberta Health Services offers a variety of prenatal services, including group education classes that take place evenings and weekends in locations throughout the South Zone. Topics include the physical and emotional changes of pregnancy, making healthy lifestyle choices for your baby, preparing for birth and knowing birth choices, feeding your baby, and being a new parent. Contact your local public health centre or Health Link Alberta at 1.866.408.5465 as early as possible in your pregnancy to get the most out of these sessions.

TRAVEL HEALTH SERVICES

Planning to beat winter's chill by escaping to a warmer climate? Alberta Health Services Travel Health Services can teach you about risks for communicable disease when travelling, how to prevent getting sick, and will also provide the required travel immunizations, all on a fee-for-service basis. For information, contact the location nearest you.

- Lethbridge Community Health Centre: 403.388.6666.
- Medicine Hat Community Health Centre: 403.502.8227.
- Brooks Community Health Centre: 403.501.3300.
- Oyen Community Health Services: 403.664.3651.
- Bow Island Provincial Building: 403.545.2296.



HOME CARE

Home Care services are for individuals seeking either community or facility-based continuing care services. All services provided through Home Care are based on an assessment and development of a care plan. Services may include personal care services, respite, palliative care and wound management. For more information about Home Care in the South Zone, call 403.388.6380 or 1.866.388.6380.



Ryan Thomson, Site Manager, Chinook Regional Hospital (CRH), left, and Tony Jung, Executive Director, Friends of Chinook Regional Hospital, take a break from admin duties to race two of the hospital's new wheelchairs – supplied by Friends – down a hallway at CRH.

FRIENDS ARE ON A ROLL

Chinook Regional Hospital has Friends – in deed. This non-profit group recently donated a fleet of 42 much-needed wheelchairs to the hospital

Story and photo by Sherri Gallant |

There's a proverb that says a bit of fragrance always clings to the hand that gives roses. If that's the case, the Friends of Chinook Regional Hospital society must be a sweet-smelling bunch of folks.

It's Friends who are responsible for the wheelchairs used by patients to get to a waiting car outside to go home when they're discharged. And it's Friends, too, who bought the wheels that patients use at the facility while they are recovering from surgery or illness.

A fleet of 42 new wheelchairs and accessories were recently donated by the Friends society; a non-profit group powered by staff and volunteers who work in the gift shop and manage the TV and phone-rental program on site.

The time they give provides much for many, since profits from gift shop sales and other endeavours of the Friends (including TV and phone rentals at the hospital) are donated to Chinook Regional Hospital (CRH) to support patient-care programs and services. The latest

acquisition of wheelchairs is really just the tip of the iceberg.

"Friends really are unsung heroes to us," says Ryan Thomson, Site Manager at CRH.

"Wheelchairs are a constant critical piece of equipment in the hospital. We require different sizes – for bariatric patients and pediatric patients, for example – and we're always in need of special accessories for them, like oxygen tank holders and leg extensions.

"That's where Friends come in and we appreciate what they do for us so much."

Tony Jung, Executive Director of Friends, says

the society is committed to enriching patient care, providing services to the hospital community and fostering volunteerism.

"Ryan will approach us with a critical need and we take it to our allocations committee," says Jung. "If it meets our criteria, it's approved, and it usually is."

The new wheelchairs are valued at about \$10,000 in total.

To see Friends in action, visit the gift shop in the hospital atrium. ■

FRIENDS REALLY ARE UNSUNG HEROES TO US ... WE APPRECIATE WHAT THEY DO SO MUCH

– Ryan Thomson, Site Manager at CRH

VISIT US ONLINE

GET IN YOUR ZONE

Local health care is important to you and your family. To find out the latest news stories, health advisories and health services, visit **AHS In My Zone**. There, you can get the info that's relevant to your community, meet the zone leadership team and find out how to share your feedback for improving our health system. Connect to your zone at www.albertahealthservices.ca/zones.asp.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Providing patient-centred and quality health care to Albertans not only requires the best people and programs, but the best facilities to meet your needs. AHS and the Government of Alberta are planning for the future and investing in the construction, redevelopment and renovation of facilities across the province. Stay on top of developments in health care capital projects in your zone by visiting www.albertahealthservices.ca/capitalprojects.asp.

HEALTH CARE LOCATOR

Finding health care facilities, programs and services has never been simpler with the Alberta Health Services online Health Care Locator. Just visit our website and click on "**Find Health Care**" to search by program name, type of service, specific hospital or facility, or enter your city name or postal code.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

The Alberta Health Services website is a one-stop shop of education resources for schools and teachers looking for student health information. Topics include addiction and substance abuse, mental health, nutrition, injury prevention and sexual health. To see what's available, go to our website and see the "**Information For**" section, or visit www.albertahealthservices.ca/2909.asp.



TWITTER

Follow your zone @AHS_SouthZone on Twitter where we tweet about your health and more:

- Taking a tropical #WinterVacation? Not sure if you should "fake and bake" first? Get the facts on indoor #tanning: ow.ly/gsbcy.
- Maybe someone you know is struggling to #QuitSmoking. How can you help? ow.ly/gpfQH. Show sensitivity. Be #supportive.
- #GoodFats versus #BadFats – what the heck's the difference? ow.ly/gpgmY.
- It's tough enough to make sure you're eating well: ow.ly/gpgfH. How can you ensure your kids #EatHealthy too?



Download the AHS mobile app for iPhone or Android

- Emergency department wait times
- Health care locator
- More...

www.albertahealthservices.ca/mobile.asp





Sara Villamil of Yoga Mandala demonstrates a calming yoga posture.

MIND AND BODY BALANCE

An ancient practice, yoga blends good karma and good health

Story by Anne Georg | Photo by Ewan Nicholson | Visit applemag.ca

Millions of North Americans use yoga as part of their physical, mental and spiritual regime, reaping the benefits of a practice that has survived for more than 5,000 years.

Yoga has several scientifically proven health benefits, as well as perceived health benefits that can't be easily measured through science. Here are just five.

1 HELPS REDUCE STRESS

"With the exception of diseases caused by genetics, most diseases are caused or exacerbated by stress, including cardiovascular disease and depression," says Dr. Hana Stastny, a Calgary medical doctor and pathology and psychology instructor in the yoga therapy extension certificate at Mount Royal University.

Yoga helps reduce stress on numerous levels because breathing slows while in the physical postures, or "asanas." The intense focus yoga requires also takes the mind off stressors.

2 HELPS MANAGE PAIN

"Yoga has had a tremendously positive impact on many of my patients," says Cliona Corbett, a physiotherapist at Alberta Health Services' Chronic Pain Centre in Calgary. "They tell me that the benefits of a yoga practice have improved all areas of their self – physical, mental, social, cognitive and spiritual."

Corbett recommends yoga to her patients who suffer chronic pain because its holistic approach to health helps people make positive changes in their lives.

3 IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE

"Done properly, yoga increases flexibility, mobility and strength," Stastny says. "That helps anyone at any age, but it is particularly important to our quality of life as we age."

Because many yoga poses include weight-bearing elements, this can help prevent osteoporosis, particularly in women.

4 AIDS ORGAN FUNCTION

Yogic breathing involves the diaphragm, which moves downward during breathing and massages the entire abdomen. That improves digestion and blood circulation, benefiting every organ in the body including the brain, allowing clearer thinking.

Additionally, the deep yogic breath makes the lungs and thorax more flexible, helping prevent chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

5 FINDS MEANING

"Yoga practice involves meditative techniques, which affect the mind, body and emotions," Stastny says.

"Over a long period of time, it can create a profound calmness and can give meaning to life." ■

GOOD KARMA

TIPS FOR SAFE YOGA

- Consult your physician or health care provider before starting any new exercise routine.
- Always inform your yoga teacher of any physical injuries or conditions you have.
- Take a few classes to learn the basics before practising at home.
- Know your physical limitations and don't push beyond them.
- Focus on the breath – if it's not about the breathing, it's not yoga.
- Don't expect overnight results; reap the long-term benefits.



JUST BREATHE

Breathing is an important part of any yoga practice, and you don't have to be on the mat to take advantage of its power. Have you ever noticed how you breathe when you feel calm? The next time you are relaxed, take a moment to notice how your body feels. Or think about how you breathe when you first wake up in the morning or just before you fall asleep. Breathing exercises can help you relax, because they make your body feel like it does when you are already relaxed.

BELLY BREATHING

Belly breathing is easy to do and very relaxing. Try this basic exercise any time you need to relax or relieve stress.

1. Sit in a comfortable position.
2. Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.
3. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.
4. Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in, and use it to push all the air out.
5. Do this breathing three to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.

COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES

Many people use alternative treatments, such as herbal remedies or yoga, along with traditional medical care. Complementary treatments focus on your overall health and may help you feel better. Visit

MyHealth.Alberta.ca to

find out more about these options. And always discuss any treatments you are considering with your doctor to make sure that alternative treatments don't replace traditional medical care.



WE HAVE THE KEYS TO YOUR HEART

It keeps your blood pumping and other organs functioning, matching your pace, 24/7.

Yup, that hard-working heart of yours sure does a lot for you, and this month – Heart Month – we're encouraging you to ask yourself what you're doing for your heart in return.

From diet, to exercise, to stress, our



day-to-day choices directly impact the health of our hearts.

Time to start showing your heart a little love!

Get heart healthy today (and stay that way) with these tips and tools: www.albertahealthservices.ca/healthyheart.asp.

TRUE GIFT OF LOVE FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

Here's a real heart-warmer: when Olivia Jordheim was born prematurely last February, her mom would have done anything to stay by her side – including sleep in the hallway outside the ICU. That's when staff at Medicine Hat Regional stepped in, with the keys to a home away from home

Story by Kerri Robins | Photo courtesy Valene Jordheim

Olivia Jordheim is a one-year-old cherub. She's chubby in all the right places and sports the cutest, 'I can do anything' look on her face.

You'd never know she started life at just over six weeks early in intensive care, weighing in at slightly over four lbs.

"I had nothing for her other than a pair of socks that pretty much covered her whole leg," says mom Valene Jordheim.

Four days after Olivia was born by emergency C-section on Feb. 10 last year, Jordheim was discharged.

"But I couldn't go home and leave my baby," says Jordheim. "I told the nurses I'd sleep in the hall and wouldn't bother anybody."

Any mom would be OK with the hallway, but the nursing staff at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital had a better idea.

"They gave us a 'home' in the family room on the Maternal Child Unit, all nicely furnished and complete with a bed, TV, fridge, microwave, room for a crib; everything my family needed so we could be together," says Jordheim.

Furnished through donations to the Medicine Hat and District Health

Foundation, the family room is used by families when their children must stay in the hospital for an extended length of time.

"We're thrilled at the support of the community in donations to furnish this room," says Heather Bach, donor relations co-ordinator.

"The room is comfortable and has a warm feeling and, when you walk in, you're leaving the hospital – so to speak."

Jordheim arrived at the hospital last February, gravely ill with a fever of 40C, pains in her belly and was extremely disoriented.

"I think my bones are all crumbling," she remembers telling the nurse.

"I wasn't in a position to make any decisions," Jordheim says. "But with the support and knowledge of a great team of doctors, my husband was a rock."

Jordheim was suffering from a rare bacterial infection of the amniotic membranes and fluid in her placenta; 'chorioamnionitis' in medical terms. Occurring in about one to two per cent of pregnancies, the baby's survival rate to term is tenuous.

But premie status doesn't seem to hold much weight in Olivia's world. Despite the odds, mom says she's doing fine with no long-term concerns.

"I'm indebted to the caring staff at the hospital," says Jordheim. "The doctors took charge and calmly guided my husband through all the information he needed to come to the best decision in our situation."

"And the nurses who took such good care of Olivia when I couldn't, the family room that allowed us to bond as a family right away – I can't say enough how grateful we all are," says Jordheim. "I still have Olivia's first gift – a tiny knitted tuque, handmade by a member of the foundation volunteers group."

For more information, please visit Medicine Hat and District Health Foundation, www.inyourcommunity.ca or call 403.528.8133. ■

“THE ROOM IS COMFORTABLE AND HAS A WARM FEELING, AND WHEN YOU WALK IN, YOU’RE LEAVING THE HOSPITAL – SO TO SPEAK

– Heather Bach, Medicine Hat and District Health Foundation



Kurt Jordheim gazes at his early Valentine's present, his premature daughter, Olivia, born a year ago on Feb. 10, at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital.

NEW MEMBERS BRING IN FRESH VIEWPOINT

Story by Kristin Bernhard |

Alberta Health Services (AHS) is forever growing and changing in an attempt to bring the best health care to the province.

Albertans need and expect to be heard and consulted when it comes to local health care decisions and priorities, and Health Advisory Council (HAC) members are among those who make that happen.

"One of the biggest things with AHS is there are so many changes taking place," says Margaret Kargard, one of Palliser Triangle's newest HAC members.

"It's exciting to have community involvement when those changes happen."

Kargard volunteered to be on the HAC because she saw it as a chance to represent her community.

"I live in a very rural and diverse area," she says.

"I want to provide a voice for members of my community who otherwise may not have the opportunity to have one."

AHS has made it a priority to increase local decision-making and community consultation. The 12 HACs across the province help communities focus on local health issues and provide feedback to AHS on community needs.

And that's a positive start, says Kargard.

"It's an opportunity for the community to say, 'I am a part of this.'" ■

Welcome to new South Zone HAC members.

• **OLDMAN RIVER:** Lorraine Neal, Helen McMenamin and Susan Koots.

• **PALLISER TRIANGLE:** Ron Wickson, Sara Joan Armour and Margaret Kargard.

All HAC meetings are open to the public. To attend, make a presentation or see the dates of upcoming meetings, visit www.albertahealthservices.ca/hac.

RETURN-TO-WORK PLAN CLEANS UP

Story by Sherri Gallant |

Some return-to-work employees in the South Zone can come back from illness or injury a little sooner, thanks to a new program from Infection Prevention and Control.

If they're a good fit for the program, workers can conduct hand-hygiene audits at a pace they can handle, and at the discretion of their schedules.

While hand-hygiene audits are a provincial directive, connecting with the return-to-work program is a South Zone initiative.

"We prefer them to have a nursing background, as that training provides them with a better

understanding of the work they're observing, and there are times when they have to go into patients' rooms," says Jennifer Ellison, infection control professional at Chinook Regional Hospital.

"But we can provide training if necessary."

The auditors, using iPads, observe a broad view of health care workers to monitor their hand-hygiene practises.

Departments receive the data on a quarterly basis and the committee uses it to determine where improvement is needed.

"Audits are ongoing and are part of our 10-year strategic plan," says Ellison. ■

CLINIC OPENS

Southern Alberta residents struggling with obesity can now better manage their weight thanks to a new Bariatric Specialty Clinic in Medicine Hat that opened in January. Operating out of the River Heights Professional Centre, the clinic is staffed by a range of experts – including physicians, registered nurses, dietitians, mental health specialists and rehabilitation professionals – who collaborate to create specialized, weight-management strategies for their patients. Clinic patients must be referred by their physician.

SOUTH ZONE

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Zone Medical Director Dr. Vanessa Maclean
Senior Vice-President Sean Chilton



DR. VANESSA MACLEAN



SEAN CHILTON

AHS embraces local leadership and zone-based decision-making. Right here in southern Alberta, front-line physicians and other clinical leaders at every level of the organization have joint planning and decision-making authority with operational leaders, meaning faster decision-making closer to where care is provided.

ALBERTA: ZONE BY ZONE

NORTH ZONE

Population: 447,740 • Life expectancy: 79.8 years • Hospitals: 34

- | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| COMMUNITIES: | • Fort MacKay | • Kinuso | • Slave Lake |
| • Athabasca | • Fort McMurray | • Lac la Biche | • Smoky Lake |
| • Barrhead | • Fort Vermilion | • La Crete | • Spirit River |
| • Beaverlodge | • Fox Creek | • Manning | • Swan Hills |
| • Berwyn | • Glendon | • Mayerthorpe | • Thorhild |
| • Bonnyville | • Grande Cache | • McLennan | • Trout Lake |
| • Boyle | • Grande Prairie | • Medley | • Valleyview |
| • Cold Lake | • Grimshaw | • Onoway | • Vilna |
| • Conklin | • High Level | • Peace River | • Wabasca/Desmarais |
| • Edson | • High Prairie | • Peerless Lake | • Westlock |
| • Elk Point | • Hinton | • Radway | • Whitecourt |
| • Fairview | • Hythe | • Rainbow Lake | • Worsley |
| • Falher | • Janvier | • Redwater | • Zama City |
| • Fort Chipewyan | • Jasper | • St. Paul | |

CENTRAL ZONE

Population: 453,469 • Life expectancy: 80.7 years • Hospitals: 31

- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------|
| COMMUNITIES: | • Galahad | • Mundare | • Sylvan Lake |
| • Bashaw | • Hanna | • Myrnam | • Three Hills |
| • Bentley | • Hardisty | • Olds | • Tofield |
| • Breton | • Hughenden | • Ponoka | • Trochu |
| • Camrose | • Innisfail | • Provost | • Two Hills |
| • Castor | • Islay | • Red Deer | • Vegreville |
| • Consort | • Killam | • Rimbey | • Vermilion |
| • Coronation | • Kitscoty | • Rocky Mountain House | • Viking |
| • Daysland | • Lacombe | • Sedgewick | • Wainwright |
| • Drayton Valley | • Lamont | • Stettler | • Wetaskiwin |
| • Drumheller | • Linden | • Sundre | • Willingdon |
| • Eckville | • Lloydminster | | • Winfield |
| • Elnora | • Mannville | | |

EDMONTON ZONE

Population: 1,186,121

• Life expectancy: 81.8 years • Hospitals: 13

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| COMMUNITIES: | • Gibbons | • Stony Plain |
| • Beaumont | • Leduc | • Thorsby |
| • Devon | • Morinville | |
| • Edmonton | • St. Albert | |
| • Evansburg | • Sherwood Park | |
| • Fort Saskatchewan | • Spruce Grove | |

CALGARY ZONE

Population: 1,408,606

• Life expectancy: 82.9 years • Hospitals: 13

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| COMMUNITIES: | • Chestermere | • Nanton |
| • Airdrie | • Claresholm | • Okotoks |
| • Banff | • Cochrane | • Stavely |
| • Black Diamond | • Cremona | • Strathmore |
| • Calgary | • Didsbury | • Turner Valley |
| • Canmore | • Gleichen | • Vulcan |
| | • High River | |

SOUTH ZONE

Population: 289,661

• Life expectancy: 80.3 years • Hospitals: 13

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| COMMUNITIES: | • Pass | • Oyen |
| • Bassano | • Fort Macleod | • Picture Butte |
| • Blairmore | • Granum | • Pincher Creek |
| • Bow Island | • Irvine | • Raymond |
| • Brooks | • Lethbridge | • Redcliff |
| • Cardston | • Magrath | • Taber |
| • Coaldale | • Medicine Hat | • Vauxhall |
| • Crowsnest | • Milk River | |

HERE'S HOW TO REACH US

ZONE NEWS EDITOR, SOUTH ZONE: Sherri Gallant
PHONE: 403.388.6002

EMAIL: sherri.gallant@albertahealthservices.ca

MAIL: 900, 400 4 Ave. S.
Lethbridge, Alberta, T1J 4E1

To see South Zone News online, please visit www.albertahealthservices.ca/5827.asp

LAYOUT AND DESIGN: Kit Poole
IMAGING: Michael Brown

Zone News – South Zone is published monthly by Alberta Health Services to inform Albertans of the programs and services available to them, and of the work being done to improve the health care system in their communities.

FSC LOGO
(printer places on)

The paper used by Zone News is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, an international, non-profit organization that promotes sustainable, responsibly managed forests.

Immunization. Information. Prevention.

A visit to an AHS Travel Health Clinic is a prescription for healthy vacationing.

Book your appointment today.



Calgary - 403.955.6777
Edmonton - 780.735.0100
Alberta - 1.866.408.5465(LINK)

