January 23, 2003

Transition underway to fewer health regions, integrated mental health

Edmonton...Albertans will see a smooth transition as the province moves from 17 to nine health regions and integrates mental health services into those regions. Both changes come into effect April 1, 2003.

"Our first priority in the transition to nine health regions and the integration of mental health services is no disruption in services to patients, and a stable work environment for health care staff," said Health and Wellness Minister Gary Mar. "We now can get down to the business of managing the many details involved in an efficient and transparent transfer."

Board chairs appointed

As a first step in the transition to fewer, larger health regions, board chairs have been selected from existing chairs and board members. The new chairs were selected for their strong and successful business leadership abilities. They will work with the current regional boards and stakeholders on the transfer of staff, services and assets, and on the negotiation of multi-year performance contracts that include a process for community participation.

The Minister and MLAs will finalize a governance structure for the expanded regions, and will work with the chairs to identify potential candidates for the new boards. These candidates will be drawn from existing board membership, and the final decision will be made before the end of February. The chairs also will recommend which nine of the current 16 chief executive officers (CEOs) will serve the expanded regions. Those designations will be announced shortly. The new regional boards coming into effect April 1, 2003, will need to approve the CEO selections.

Mental health integrated

The transfer and integration of mental health programs, services and facilities into Alberta's expanded health regions is moving ahead as planned in response to a recommendation of the Premier's Advisory Council on Health. Existing funding will be carried over to maintain service levels.

It is government's intention that mental health collective agreements and assets be transferred intact to ensure no disruption to staff. Alberta's four mental health facilities - Alberta Hospital Ponoka, Alberta Hospital Edmonton, Claresholm Care Centre, and Raymond Care Centre - will retain their status as provincial resources, but will be managed by their respective health authorities.

The current Alberta Mental Health Board will retain governance of province-wide services and programs such as forensic psychiatry, suicide prevention, Aboriginal mental health, and tele-mental health. The Board will also work with the expanded health regions to establish provincial program councils to advocate for Albertans, and promote mental health through education and awareness programs.

Existing health regional boards and CEOs will remain in place until April 1, 2003, when the new boards assume responsibility for managing the expanded regions.

For further information, contact:

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Dial 310-0000 for toll free access outside Edmonton
Access is available on-line at http://www.health.gov.ab.ca

## Backgrounder

### January 23, 2003

Following are the chairs appointed to the boards of the nine expanded health regions, which come into effect April 1, 2003:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTH REGION</th>
<th>CHAIR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Region 1</td>
<td>Jack Ady, current chair, Chinook Health Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Region 2</td>
<td>Leonard Mitzel, current chair Palliser Health Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Region 3</td>
<td>David Tuer, current chair, Calgary Health Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Region 4</td>
<td>Jean Graham, current chair, David Thompson Health Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Region 5</td>
<td>Ed Andersen, current chair, East Central Health Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Region 6</td>
<td>Neil Wilkinson, current chair, Capital Health Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Region 7</td>
<td>Robert Jackson, current chair, Aspen Health Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Region 8</td>
<td>Marvin Moore, current chair, Mistahia Health Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Health Region 9

Scott Garner
, current chair, Northern Lights Health Authority

For further information, contact:

Michael Shields - Communications, Alberta Health and Wellness - (780) 427-7164

Send us your comments or questions

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