
**Child & Youth Advisory Council
Alberta Health Services – Child Health**

Terms of Reference

Chairs/Coordination:

Meetings will be co-chaired by alternating CAYAC members. Co-chairs will attend a pre-planning meeting with CAYAC coordinators via teleconference to prepare for the CAYAC meeting.

Staff members at Alberta Children's Hospital hired to support CAYAC will provide oversight and guidance to the Council and to those who access the council.

Purpose:

The Child and Youth Advisory Council (CAYAC) bring a youth perspective to the planning and delivery of health related programs directed at children and youth throughout Alberta Health Services with an emphasis on Southern Alberta. Presently CAYAC is coordinated by the Family and Community Resource Centre at the Alberta Children's Hospital in collaboration with youth serving organizations in Southern Alberta.

CAYAC supports the development and maintenance of a child and youth friendly environment within AHS and community health programs and services by advising administrators, staff and planners on issues regarding care and physical surroundings. CAYAC will consult on current services as well as those in the planning stage, providing suggestions or new ideas to improve the quality of health services to, and experience of care for, children and youth.

Functions:

The Council will:

- Create opportunities for the collective voices of children and youth to be heard by service providers and policy makers.
- Provide feedback, consultation and propose changes to current hospital and community health services for children and youth.
- Provide advice on the development of new child health programs and services.
- Provide advice on ways to improve the experience of care for children and youth.
- Provide input from their perspective regarding projects, policy and strategic planning that may affect services which impact children and youth.
- Provide assistance in determining what artistic, recreational, and other holistic activities might enhance AHS and community health service delivery, facilities and sites.
- Provide a link to other community youth groups
- Represent a youth health perspective on behalf of AHS at local, provincial or national forums/events.

Membership:

- CAYAC will reflect a balance of membership from urban and rural areas, diverse cultural backgrounds, gender, and varied experiences within the health care system. Presently, CAYAC will have about 30 members with a philosophy of representation from around Southern Alberta.
- Members could be current recipients of service, past patients, siblings, healthy youth in the community, or young adults who have had experience with child or youth health services.
- Members can join CAYAC between the ages of 12 to 18. Members over the age of 18 may choose to continue as members of CAYAC until they withdraw as long as they meet the group expectations.
- Council members under the age of 18 will need to provide parental/guardian approval.

Term of Membership:

Council members commit to a minimum of a one year term.

General Expectations:

- Members are expected to attend Council meetings and other activities regularly and to support Council projects whenever possible. Ad hoc opportunities arise between regularly scheduled meetings which council members will be asked to support.
- Members must be willing to express their views openly in a group, listen to different views, and encourage other Council members to share their ideas and viewpoints.
- Members should be willing to advocate for, or speak on behalf of, other young people who may not have an opportunity to be heard.
- Members will be asked to sign a group expectations agreement when they join CAYAC.
- Members will abide by the Code of Conduct and other policies and guidelines which pertain to all AHS staff and volunteers

Meeting Frequency:

The Council will meet 5-6 times per year on Saturdays between September and June. Meetings may be in person or via telehealth. Rural members may join the meeting via telehealth if sufficient support is available in their region/zone.

Accountability:

CAYAC will be accountable to ACH Site Leadership and with their support link as appropriate within AHS.

Administration:

ACH Family & Community Resource Centre staff resources will be utilized to provide the day to day support for the ongoing development and maintenance of the Council. A CAYAC Coordinator will oversee the work of the Council and coordinate consultations with child and youth health programs and services. Coordinators from each region (zone) will support the work of CAYAC and act as advisors to the young people from their area. These zone coordinators may arise from community and not necessarily from within Alberta Health Services.

Members will be eligible for reimbursement for any agreed upon expenses such as travel. Council members will be supported to learn and develop leadership skills.

Terms or reference will be reviewed as needed or annually.