

Community Advisory Networks (CAN's)

What is a Community Advisory Network?

A network can be described as a “*group or system of interconnected cooperating individuals.*” The **Regional Health Services Act** states that a regional health authority shall establish one or more Community Advisory Networks (CANs) to help facilitate consultation with and input from local communities. CANs advise the Authority on broad issues related to the health of the community and assist the Authority to understand the needs and priorities of communities and their residents.

Heartland Regional Health Authority's policy on Community Advisory Networks (Reference GP5-9) policy reflects the diverse nature of CANs in Heartland Health Region. The policy recognizes and supports existing organizations as CANs or accepts new groups created by communities themselves, within the Community Advisory Network framework, rather than focusing solely on creation of CANs by the Region.

What is the purpose of a Community Advisory Network?

The Networks will contribute to Heartland Health Region's planning process as follows:

- Advise the Authority on broad issues with respect to the provision of health services and the allocation of resources of the communities.
- Assist the Authority to understand the needs, preferences and priorities of people and communities.

Guidelines of the Community Advisory Network

Networks and Advisory Groups shall:

- Be representative of the general public as well as of specific interest groups. Heartland Regional Health Authority will endeavour to achieve a broad representation from the community and will solicit input from all sectors. Age groups (youth, adult and seniors), Gender (male/female parity), Socio-economic backgrounds (culture, social situation and financial circumstances), Community knowledge and experience.
- Be encouraged to communicate community needs to the Authority and provide advice on the relevance of programs and services.
- Communicating of information to the general public using a variety of forums and mediums.
- Participate in and provide input to planning discussions.
- Foster and contribute to an open, supportive and collaborative climate.
- Consider the broad regional implications of issues and potential solutions.
- Be structured, led, facilitated, monitored, evaluated and reported on by Authority Members, the President/CEO or others as assigned.