Mental Health Patient Advocate

Alberta Health

Salary Range: $153,289 – $201,175
($5,873.18 – $7,707.88 bi-weekly)

Open Competition
Job ID: 1051122

Closing Date: Open until a suitable candidate is selected
Alberta Health

Overview

Alberta Health

Alberta Health is advancing a culture of collaboration and creative systems-oriented decision making to achieve a responsive, sustainable, integrated and accountable health system that meets the needs of Albertans. Working with partners to create the conditions for healthy Albertans in a healthy Alberta, the ministry sets policy and direction to ensure that Albertans receive the right health care services, at the right time, in the right place, provided by the right health care providers and teams.

A more detailed description of Alberta Health and its programs and initiatives can be found at: www.health.alberta.ca.

The Office of the Alberta Health Advocates

The Office of the Alberta Health Advocates (OAHA), within the Ministry of Health, consists of the Mental Health Patient Advocate (MHPA) and the Health Advocate. Together, providing a clear point of access for the public, the Advocates help people by listening to health-related concerns and assisting them in finding ways to resolve those concerns. The Advocates refer people to the appropriate programs and services to address their complaints. The Advocates have the ability to conduct reviews and investigations into specific complaints related to patient rights and the Health Charter. The Advocates provide education about the Alberta Health Charter and patient rights set out in the Mental Health Act.

The OAHA is part of a network of dispute resolution processes that address concerns and complaints within Alberta’s health services environment, assisting Albertans in dealing with concerns and empowering them to be effective advocates in their own health and health care. The OAHA supports and advocates for a health care system that is responsive and accountable to the people being served.

The MHPA was established in 1990 under Part 6 of the Mental Health Act and is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The MHPA’s role is to fulfil legislative requirements as set out in the Mental Health Patient Advocate Regulation, which includes helping patients (and those acting on their behalf) who are or have been involuntarily detained in a mental health facility or are receiving treatment under a Community Treatment Order, understand and exercise their rights. The MHPA may also investigate and facilitate redress of complaints, and is required to provide the Minister of Health with an annual report to table in the Legislature.

Vision: The Office envisions an integrated and responsive system that empowers and supports Albertans as full participants in their care and fairly addresses their concerns about services that impact health.

Mission: The Office promotes self-advocacy and assists Albertans in dealing with their concerns about services impacting their health and becoming empowered and effective advocates.

Values: The Office values Respect, Engagement, Compassion, Integrity, and Excellence.
Mental Health Patient Advocate Position Summary

The Mental Health Patient Advocate is responsible to assist patients to understand and exercise their rights under the Mental Health Act. Mental health patient rights under the Mental Health Act exist to help people who are or have been detained in hospital under admission or renewal certificates, and people under community treatment orders (CTO). The MHPA provides assistance to patients and others (including those acting on the patients’ behalf) by conducting investigations into complaints and providing information and education about patient rights under the Mental Health Act. Information and education is also provided to families/community organizations acting on behalf of an individual who is detained in a mental health facility or under CTO.

As the ideal candidate, your commitment to advocacy will be essential in helping carry out the advocate’s legislative mandate to protect patient rights, investigate complaints, and report on investigations.

The protection of rights exists within the value of patient-centred care and treating patients with respect and dignity. It is critical when a patient loses their liberty due to their detainment or other restrictions, that they feel they have some respect and control in their situation. To support this vulnerable population, the MHPA works collaboratively with health care providers and others to strengthen awareness and understanding of the importance of upholding patient rights enshrined under the Mental Health Act; together, we play a key role in helping patients and persons acting on their behalf to understand and exercise those rights.

Reporting to the Minister of Health on legislative matters and to the Deputy Minister of Health on administrative issues, you will serve as an impartial body and as a resource for the mental health community. An exceptional capacity to build and maintain relationships will support your work with diverse stakeholders to help clients navigate the system, as well as develop recommendations to improve mental health services and systems for those detained in a mental health facility or under CTO. Serving in a senior advisory capacity, you will provide information and recommendations to the Minister to help drive the delivery of positive outcomes for patients subject to the Mental Health Act.

Major Accountabilities

Leading investigation of complaints from or relating to patients who are or have been involuntarily detained in a mental health facility or are receiving treatment and care under a Community Treatment Order.

Providing rights information and visiting patients and inter-disciplinary team members in each of the designated mental health facilities under the Act, making educational presentations promoting patient rights to key stakeholder groups, and serving as a standing or ad hoc member of different committees.

Delivering expert advice and recommendations to the Minister that will assist in producing positive outcomes for patients.

Providing a consumer-oriented and independent source of information for patients under the Mental Health Act and others acting on their behalf.

Supporting patient rights perspectives in the development and implementation of mental health policies and procedures.
Contributing to achieving ministry and government-wide business plan goals and objectives.

Lead and participate in initiatives that support health system reform which have potential positive impact on the health and well-being of all Albertans.

Leading and recommending proposed changes to legislation and regulations.

Leading, coaching and mentoring the Advocate Representative Team and fostering a workplace culture of service excellence.

Managing fiscal and human resources to ensure the effective use of resources in meeting business plan objectives.

Build and maintain positive, collaborative working relationships with complainants, client and families, key stakeholders and government officials to effectively address concerns and complaints while utilizing strategic, non-adversarial forms for complaint resolution.

Provide the Minister with an annual report, summarizing the Health Advocate’s activities for each fiscal year, to be tabled in the Alberta Legislature.

Authorities

The Mental Health Patient Advocate is involved with the administration of legislation relating to the business of the office and the ministry, and other legislation related to leadership responsibilities and delegated authorities including:

*Mental Health Act*
Mental Health Regulation
Community Treatment Order Regulation
Mental Health Act Review Panel Regulation
Mental Health Act Forms Regulation
Mental Health Patient Advocate Regulation

*Financial Administration Act*

*Government Organization Act*

*Public Service Act*

*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

*Health Information Act*

*Personal Directives Act*

*Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act* (AGTA)

*Protection for Persons in Care Act* (PPIC)

*Regional Health Authorities Act*

Patient Concerns Resolution Process Regulation

Organization

The Office of the Alberta Health Advocates is part of Alberta Health but operates in a manner that represents an arms-length relationship. The Mental Health Patient Advocate has a reporting relationship to the Minister of Health on legislative matters and to the Deputy Minister of Health on administrative issues.
Financial and Human Resource Management

The Mental Health Patient Advocate, in conjunction with the Health Advocate, provides direction and support to an integrated staff complement. The operations and budget of the Office of the Alberta Health Advocates, and its staff, falls under the responsibility of the Health Advocate. The office is located in Edmonton; all geographic regions of the province are served from this location.

Contacts

This collaborative, consultative focused role relies on well-established relationships with the Minister, Deputy Minister, members of the ministry’s executive team and senior officials; the Health Advocate and staff within the ministry and across the Government of Alberta. Collaborative relationships with Alberta Health Services; Health Professions Regulatory Colleges and professional associations. Contact with front line physicians, nurses, and other health service providers are essential, while contact with the public and with elected officials is a central part of the role.

Issues / Challenges

Working collaboratively with ministry officials in order to promote and protect patient rights.

Effectively communicating feedback to the Minister, ministry officials and other health leaders on the development of legislation, regulation, policy, and programs and services that impact Albertans and contribute to positive systemic change. Aiming to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population, particularly vulnerable Albertans.

Balancing the expectations of the public and the media with the requirements of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act, Health Information Act and the mandate of the MHPA.

Considering the mental health and broader health systems, identifying, promoting and advocating for programs and services that meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

Contributing to the department’s response to the increased needs and expectations of Albertans for the services provided by Alberta Health.

Developing strategic partnerships to promote and protect patient rights.

Promoting the capacity and accountability of Alberta Health Services, Alberta Health and other ministries and agencies to design, integrate, deliver and assess services.

The Person

(1) Knowledge/Skills/Experience

Extensive related senior leadership experience in a public serving organization, working with vulnerable populations including those with mental illness.

In-depth knowledge of mental health and health care systems and supports, including:

- An understanding of patient rights, advocacy, and administrative fairness concepts.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and maintain collaborative working relationships within the organization and with diverse stakeholders.
o Strong understanding of current and emerging issues affecting patient rights and the health and mental health care systems in Alberta.

o Proven strengths in understanding relevant legislation and providing advocacy support to clients.

Specialized knowledge of the environment or context affecting the OAHA, including governments, agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in setting policy and delivering services related to health and mental health in Alberta. This includes knowledge of applicable legal and legislative frameworks such as the Mental Health Act and the Mental Health Patient Advocate Regulation, and principles of natural justice.

Knowledge of relevant legislation, regulation and appropriate uses and privacy issues related to sensitive information, personal health information and mental health information specifically.

Proven ability to work respectfully with individuals who have interacted with mental health services and systems.

Ability to lead, influence, collaborate, and negotiate innovative solutions to complex and diverse issues with a wide variety of stakeholders and balance the needs and interests of these groups.

A commitment to and recognized strengths in advocacy, mediation, counselling therapy and/or casework practices.

Proven skills in identifying, investigating and making recommendations to resolve complaints.

Demonstrated strengths in communicating effectively with diverse community stakeholders and with representatives in other jurisdictions.

A practices leader committed to supporting a positive and inclusive work environment that enables staff to achieve results and to develop and build organizational capacity for the future.

Proven ability to understand and prioritize important results, and focus resources to achieve them, including risk and opportunity management, setting goals, learning, evaluation and course-adjustment mechanisms.

A systems focus and capacity to think strategically about the opportunities and challenges facing the OAHA and to engage in short, medium and long-range planning to provide high-level guidance and direction.

Critical thinking skills to creatively assess situations and to generate novel or innovative solutions to challenges facing the OAHA.

Strong working knowledge of performance management, accountability frameworks, and creating the culture of a learning organization.

Experience managing significant fiscal, human and contracted resources.

Proven professional reputation demonstrating or integrity, honesty, accountability and fairness.
(2) **Academic Background**

A related university graduate-level degree in health, or related human services discipline; social science, social work, health, or law is preferred.

(3) **Position Specific Competencies**

**Alberta Public Service (APS) Competencies**

Competencies are behaviours that are essential to reach our goals in serving Albertans. The following competencies are drawn from the Alberta Public Service Competency Model to reflect government’s focus on planning, strategizing and leadership to accomplish goals. See link for more information on the competencies, [http://www.psc.alberta.ca/apscompetencies](http://www.psc.alberta.ca/apscompetencies).

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**DEVELOP NETWORKS**

Proactively building networks, connecting and building trust in relationships with different stakeholders.

Behaviours:
- Identifies stakeholders
- Builds relationships
- Focuses on client
- Communicates purposefully

**CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING**

Ability to assess options and implications in new ways to achieve outcomes and solutions.

Behaviours:
- Seeks clarity
- Challenges the process
- Integrates perspectives
- Identifies alternative solutions

**AGILITY**

Ability to anticipate, assess and readily adapt to changing priorities, maintain resilience in times of uncertainty and effectively work in a changing environment.

Behaviours:
- Seeks out new opportunities
- Anticipates change
- Emotional resilience
- Supports change
- Adapts

**BUILD COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENTS**

Leads and contributes to the conditions and environments that allow people to work collaboratively and productively to achieve outcomes.

Behaviours:
- Brings people together
- Facilitates communication
- Addresses conflict
- Empowers others
- Encourages diversity

**SYSTEMS THINKING**

The work done in the APS is part of a larger integrated and inter-related environment. It is important to know that work done in one part of the APS impacts a variety of other groups/projects inside and outside the APS. Systems Thinking allows us to keep broader impacts and connections in mind.

Behaviours:
- Looks beyond the immediate
- Considers impacts
- Understands connections
- Provides clarity

**DRIVE FOR RESULTS**

Knowing what outcomes are important and maximizing resources to achieve results that are aligned with the goals of the organization, while maintaining accountability to each other and external stakeholders.

Behaviours:
- Plans for results
- Takes accountability
- Takes risks
- Focuses on outcomes

**DEVELOP SELF AND OTHERS**

A commitment to lifelong learning and the desire to invest in the development of the long-term capability of yourself and others.

Behaviours:
- Plans for development
- Actions development
- Supports others’ development
- Develops staff
4) Diversity and Inclusion in the Alberta Public Service

The Government of Alberta is committed to a diverse and inclusive public service that reflects the population we serve to best meet the needs of Albertans. Consider joining a team where diversity, inclusion and innovation are valued and supported. For more information on diversity and inclusion, please visit the Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Appointment and Remuneration

The Mental Health Patient Advocate is appointed for a specified term of up to three years by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under part 6 of the Mental Health Act. Remuneration is determined by the Lieutenant Governor in Council in accordance with the Interpretation Act and is typically at the Executive Manager 2 range of $5,873.18-$7,707.88 bi-weekly ($153,289 - $201,175 annual). Remuneration is provided for through a Contract of Employment with Alberta Health.