



**CREATING SYNERGY MEMBERSHIP  
MLA BREAKFAST AND FORUM REPORT  
November 6, 2012**

**Summary Highlights of the Day:**  
**Overall Agenda for the Day attached.**

**MLA Breakfast – see Agenda attached**

Following the registration and breakfast, Tom Shand welcomed everyone. Introductions were done by MLAs and Creating Synergy members present. Tom presented an overview of Creating Synergy (see *Members of the Legislative Assembly Breakfast* slides 1-3 attached).

Kathy Kovacs Burns introduced Guest Speaker, Jennifer Rees (her bio is attached). Jennifer spoke about *The Common Denominator: How Patient Experience is working to Improve Quality Across Alberta Health Services* (See her slides and other attachments)

Kathy then closed the breakfast session by briefly talking about *All Albertans Have a Role: A Best Practice Tool to Engage Albertans in Improving the Health Care System* during which Kathy referred the audience to the Stakeholder Engagement Framework Executive summary and full guide in everyone's package (see last three slides from Members of the Legislative Assembly Breakfast slide deck). Kathy opened up the floor for questions from MLAs and Creating Synergy members. MLAs responded to questions concerning engagement of the public and patients. They were open to suggestions and invited Creating Synergy members to contact them and to keep them informed of health or other issues which patients faced. One MLA member (Dr. David Swan) asked why Creating Synergy invited them to this breakfast and what was our ask of MLAs. Kathy responded that this breakfast was an opportunity for MLAs to hear from and about Creating Synergy, and to encourage MLAs to also connect with Creating Synergy for questions or consultations regarding health questions that they want to follow up, particularly around health issues that arise in their discussions while in the Legislature or in their discussions while in their community/constituency offices. The MLAs thanked Creating Synergy for the breakfast the informative meeting.

The breakfast concluded and the Membership Forum began after a break.



## **Membership Forum (see agenda) – See slides**

Opening welcome, remarks and overview for the day was given by John Bachynsky.

John briefly talked about Creating Synergy (Mandate, Mission and Vision). Creating Synergy updates were mentioned, some of which followed for further discussion – 5-year Strategic Plan, Grassroots mobilization, Stakeholder Engagement, Stakeholder Collaboration, and Government Engagement. Two challenges faced by CS which we brought to the membership was working around the political cycle (i.e. advocacy position papers or presentations to the Minister of Health or bureaucrats) and capacity issues including recruiting members to our Steering Committee to help with the development of advocacy, membership awareness, fundraising and other priorities in CS Strategic Plan.

Kathy presented an overview of **Creating Synergy's Five-Year Strategic Plan** and referred to the document in members' packages. She briefly reviewed each strategic priority area goal, objectives and activities (See appropriate slides 6 – 10). Questions from members were taken and answered.

Kathy then presented some **membership survey results**. A survey was distributed to the members in the Fall of 2011 to capture members' views on policy priorities which Creating Synergy could target for advocacy work. Eight policy priorities were reviewed along with the results of member responses (See slides 11-20). Based on member survey responses, the following order was identified for the policy priorities:

1. Increase equitable access to quality healthcare to all Albertans regardless of ability to pay or where people reside in the province
2. Decrease the burden facing people living with chronic disease
3. Increase access to Palliative Care for Albertans
4. Ensure patients are the prime focus in the changing structure of health care services in Alberta
5. Increase access to integrated quality health care for Seniors
6. Increase access to continuing and long term care for Albertans
7. Secure publicly funded access to medications with the Alberta Pharmaceutical Strategy
8. Increase access to mental health services

Kathy asked that the members present confirm the order of priority or suggest changes to this order. Members were asked to break into small groups at four tables, to discuss these eight policy issue priorities and rank them in terms of highest priority to lowest. This discussion would be summarized for Creating Synergy's Advocacy Working Group to use.

Results of Table discussions:

### Table #1

1. #1 on list- Increase access to coordinated and integrated (quality) healthcare (inclusion of wellness, acute care, home care, community supports, etc.).
2. #4 - Putting people first should be priority – if people are put first, then all else will fall in place (e.g wrap-around services, addressing social determinants of health, etc.)



#### Table #2

1. #1 on list - includes everything
2. #4 - Increase patient involvement in patient health care
3. #2 - Decreasing burden is less important than increasing supports to people (reference to social determinants of health).
4. #3,5 & 6 combine together, and not only make applicable to seniors – this focus is needed across all groups, all Albertans.
5. #7 & 8 are specific.

#### Table #3

1. #1 is primary focus with all other points under it, e.g. access to mental health services implies access to care needed and facilities. Also need to deal with other things in health such as the social determinants.
2. #5 - Increase access to care for seniors should also be for all Albertans – continuing care and long term care as well as having people stay in their own homes, e.g. young people with special needs. It should say “Proper care for all Albertans”.
3. #2 - Define chronic disease – could leave out many people if unclear.

#### Table #4

1. #1 – across distance, culture, age; equitable = consistent; barrier-free access; encourages whole health system to be open; promoting health charities to be equal partners in health care system.
2. #4 – person-centred care and voice.

The discussion ended for **Lunch** and a presentation from the **Honorable Minister Fred Horne**. His presentation focused on the meaningfulness of talking with and engaging community groups such as Creating Synergy, particularly to gain insights into the priority health and services access issues faced by Albertans. He talked about his experiences in talking with Albertans and the challenges he faces as Minister of Health as well. He welcomed the opportunity to stay in touch and to hear from Creating Synergy about priority issues in the health care system and with access to services or wait times. He particularly wanted us to focus on the priority areas identified by Alberta Health in its action plan, including wellness and healthy/active living to stay healthy, improving access and reducing wait times, providing more options for continuing care, strengthening primary health care, and building one health system that can accommodate all Albertans regardless of where they live. There was very little time to address questions.

Following Minister Horne, another speaker was introduced – **Mark Harasymuk, Acting Executive Director, Pharmaceutical Funding and Guidance, Alberta Health**. Mark’s slide presentation is attached. He focused on the **Drug Program Priorities**, taking us through a bit of history and program changes within the department and talking about the Pharmacy Services Framework and Model (Product services, Patient services, and Health System services). He also mentioned briefly the plans around



lower generic drug prices and Product Listing Agreements as they both relate to best value for Alberta's government-sponsored drug plans. He did not discuss Citizens' Council – as he said this initiative is on hold. Mark answered a number of questions posed by CS members.

After a **break**, there was **follow up discussion** regarding Minister Horne's presentation and direction for Alberta Health, as well as our priorities for policy discussion and position papers.

Discussion about **next Forum in Spring** – in Calgary or Edmonton and date to be decided.

**Evaluation forms** were given to members to complete.

Session ended with a **thank-you** to all Creating Synergy members who participated, and to Executive Director and Steering Committee who organized the MLA Breakfast and Forum.