Resident Engagement

The City of Airdrie conducts annual satisfaction surveys. Health has consistently been identified as the 2nd most important issue, behind community infrastructure. We know that health and infrastructure are directly related.

Given the importance of health, the City of Airdrie joined with others in the community through the Airdrie & Area Health Coop (Coop), to sponsor a community engagement effort focused on health and health care. The Coop is FREE for all in the community to join.

Over the past 2 years, through an all-in community partnership committee, hundreds of individuals and dozens of organizations have been directly engaged in face-to-face sessions. Two all in community events were held. One for the top 80 leaders in the community and one for health and health care leaders.

Individuals in the community were engage according to health and health care need. These included:

- Healthy Adolescents
- Healthy Male Adults
- Healthy Female Adults
- Healthy Seniors
- Maternal and Infant
- Chronic Conditions
- Serious Disabilities
- Failing Health
- Frail
- End-of-Life
- Acute Events

Organization were engaged by sector. These included:

- Municipalities
- Community Not-for-Profits
- Physicians
- Non-Physician Providers
- Faith-Based Communities
- School Systems
- Large Employers
- Small to Medium Employers and Businesses
- Restaurants and Grocers
- Seniors Organizations
- Alberta Government

All were asked to respond to five (5) questions:

1. What are the health and health strength in the community? Why is this a strength?
2. What are the unmet needs? What are your priorities?
3. Who do you collaborate and cooperate with now and how do you link? Who do you want to link with more and how?
4. What should the health park be about and who should be there? What should be out in the community?
5. Could you see yourself or your organization joining and working with Coop? Under what conditions?

In addition, individuals were asked:

- What would it look like if you were to "Own Your Own Health"?

Key themes from the engagement efforts include:

- There exists a broad range of community supported health and health care services on which a community approach can be built.
- The community is buying into a health culture where all can "Own Their Own Health".

- There is a need for more community belonging (ie. healthy activity options)
- We require improved access to affordable comprehensive integrated health and health care.
- We want a health and wellness focused community.
- We require generally much better collaboration, cooperation and linking between all.
- We need it to all come together and work together.
- Need affordable health and health care – do not have good non-public insurance.
- We want a one-stop-shop health park so we can "Own Our Own Health" with outreach into the community.
- We need a new approach to seniors housing that is integrated into the social fabric of the community - no warehousing, no feedlot.
- We need digital health – generation sensitive.
- Want digital health and better use of technology so I can better management my health.
- I would participate in my health and become an expert in my health if I owned my own health.
- I would exhibit healthy behaviours – if I knew what those were!
- I would encourage my "tribe" to prioritize health.
- Yes, I/we would work with the Cooperative to advance health and health care - need to have input into governing and direction.

Themes directly related to the need for our smart community project include:

- Provide access to information and expertise digitally and by phone.
- We need a community digital referral network to facilitate access to services and expertise.
- Can we enable health and health care digitally to improve access and reduce cost?
- Let's use connected technologies to integrated providers and services.
- We want virtual health and health care.
- I want access to my health information.
- We need a generation sensitive approach to digital health – we do not all relate the same way to the digital environment.
- We do not need to see a provider face-to-face all the time.
- We need to use technology better so I can better manage my health.
- We need information sharing between providers.

- We cannot do this on our – lets join together.
- I need health related applications that meet my needs – help me sort this out.
- To improve my health, I need real-time indicators and measures of progress or a lack of.
- We need to use gamification.
- Provide online access to health and health care providers.
- I want to be in control of who has access to my data.
- Connect me to other like me so we can support each other.
- Link me to my environment.

A report to the community, summarizing the results of this 2-year engagement effort, was released to the community on April 18 of this year. Robust messaging, media and community messaging linked to that report are being used to engage the community broadly.

Going forward, engagement will continue and be expanded as we start to advance innovative solutions that address the input received from the community. This will be facilitated and supported by the Coop. Individuals and families will continue to be engaged by need-based group. We plan to formalize a need-based group structure. Group champions are being identified and these groups will be populated with those who have like needs and those who provide services to them. These groups will meet on a regular basis to identify needs and to develop actions to meet those needs.

We will also continue to engage organizations in the community by sector. Again, champions for each sector are being identified. Different sectors will be engaged in different ways. Municipalities, Community Not-For-Profits, Physicians, School System, Small to Medium Employers and Businesses and Seniors Organizations will be engaged as sectors and then individually as members and partners. Non-Physician Providers, Large Employers and Restaurants and Grocers will be engaged individually and then as members and partners due to the competitive nature of their environment. The Provincial Government will continue to be engaged directly.

Engagement will not be successful without solid information to inform that engagement. This requires a community approach to open data through connected technologies. Much of the core technology is in place or will soon be in place. Individuals and organizations in our community have existing applications, platforms and infrastructure that we can leverage off of. Our smart community challenge is about connecting technologies to enable the flow of data and content to inform a community approach to health.

Engagement of individuals, families, need-based groups and organizations in health will not work unless they have the information they need to act. They do not have this today. Health and health related data is held in silos by a wide range of providers, organizations and by individuals themselves. This data needs to be integrated and converted to useable content that is meaningful to them. Our smart community project is about creating customized user dashboards that enable individuals, families, need-based groups, organizations and the community to "Own Their Own Health" and to contribute to the health of the community. For example, in Alberta, efforts are underway to provide a personal health record solution to the general public. We are working with Alberta Health to be a demonstration community for the deployment of that application. We will then build on that to create customized dashboards for individuals.

Through the Airdrie & Area Health Coop, an Information Management Governance Committee is in place. That committee is responsible for ensuring compliance with privacy legislation for open data and connected technology efforts. This committee is working to complete a privacy impact assessment to be filed with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

In summary, as a community we want to "Own Our Own Health" and we want to enable individuals to "Own Their Own Health". If we do this we can become Canada's healthiest community and collectively create a community healthy culture where the healthy choice is the easy choice. This will result in increased healthy life expectancy. The community is already committed and running forward. Winning this challenge will supercharge engagement!