

Newsletter

Where has the time gone? Plenty has transpired in the last year and the Board of Directors is excited to inform our Membership of the progress of Open Arms.

Open Arms celebrated its one year anniversary on March 24th, 2008. It is hard to believe that one year has passed already!

We applied for our non-profit status in March and on June 3rd, 2008 we were officially incorporated as non-profit under the Societies Act. Our by-laws will be posted on the website shortly.

Our Technical Committee worked numerous hours on our website and on April 27th, our website went live! The committee is working diligently to continually improve our website. We will be adding testimonials to our website and if you would like to add one please contact Rose Lundy, the Secretary of the Board, at (403) 870-8077. If you have not yet visited our website, the address is www.openarmsadvocacy.com

We have submitted our application for charitable status that we hope to attain in the next 4 – 6 months. Once we obtain this status, we will be focusing on obtaining corporate donations to assist us in our fund raising activities.

Our Fund-raising Committee organized its first event in July. A yard sale was set up to raise funds for Open Arms. We thank all the members who donated numerous items that assisted in the success of the event. The committee is researching a wine & cheese party and some other events to raise funds. Once we pass the mandatory wait times for Casino's and Bingo's, we will research the possibility of applying for one as the revenue generated is quite substantial.

We currently have 112 members and will continue to build that base. Our goal is to obtain 1000 members. Imagine the lobbying force we will have with 1000 members! We encourage all members to tell your friends and family about Open Arms and to encourage them to purchase a membership for \$10.00 per year.

Our Media Committee has been extremely active over the past year. We have had media attention through the following media outlets:

Calgary Global Television
CTV Television
Calgary Herald
Calgary Sun
Edmonton Global Television
Edmonton Sun
Edmonton Journal
Lethbridge Herald

Red Deer Advocate
Grand Prairie Herald
CHQR Radio
660 News Radio
CBC Television
CBC Radio
A-Channel Television
CJSI Shine 88.9

Health Region

Women's Health issues such as early and late pregnancy loss. We have had a couple of Board Members that were active participators in improving this area.

Women that are miscarrying now have privacy rooms and have immediate access to social workers.

Due to the near-death of one of our clients, the following changes in emergency room procedures were made:

- ★ When EMS requires additional orders to manage patients: A.) EMS will communicate to Triage regarding patient status and request for additional orders. B.) Triage will page for a physician to present to triage for consultation with EMS and Triage nurse.
- ★ Standardized triage roles across all sites. Recommendations may include having titles/assignments that clearly identify role.
- ★ Consider having a CHR ED nurse assigned to assist/liaison with EMS/TOC "hallway" patients.
- ★ All ED physicians certified in performing a FAST ultrasound.
- ★ All ED physicians proficient with using ultrasound technology for the insertion of Central Venous Catheters (CVC).
- ★ Continue with flow initiatives to decrease ED wait times aiming for accomplishment of CTAS goals.
- ★ Various recommendations were given to Calgary Health Regions Patient Concern Department, derived from several clients on how to improve the patient complaint process.

We have had several guest speakers attend our Board Meetings:

Stacey Petriuk, Lawyer, May, Jensen, Shawna & Solomon. Stacey specializes in medical malpractice.

Dr. John Cowell, President & C.E.O, Health Quality Council of Alberta

Joanne Stalinski, Senior Vice President, Calgary Health Region, Wellness

Eileen Bell, Regional Manager of Patient Concerns, Calgary Health Region

Sharon Nettleton, Project Leader, Quality Safety & Health Information, Calgary Health Region

John Cuthbertson, Co-Chairperson, Safety Patient Council, Calgary Health Region

Before our summer break, we had established a **Mental Health Committee, Women's Health Committee and a Marketing Committee.**

We have had communication with individuals from Grand Prairie and Edmonton who would like to form sub-boards in those centres. The Board will be strategically planning on how to accomplish this.

We currently have 48 active cases with 15 that have resulted in deaths due to an adverse medical event. We formulated a Focus Group with 12 families that have lost a loved one and one client who had a near death experience. We will be meeting again shortly to compile recommendations to the Health Region to improve patient care.

Looking Forward

Our objectives for the remainder of 2008 and 2009 will be to continue to lobby government and the Health Region to make systematic changes to the Alberta Health Care system.

The Board of Directors will be reviewing a strategic plan to bring better awareness of Open Arms in all urban and rural centres in Alberta.

Open Arms will be recruiting more Directors and Committee Members. If you or somebody you know would be interested in being an active participant in improving Alberta's Health Care System please call us at 403-870-8077. We are actively searching for individuals who would like to join our advocacy committee.

Did you know?

***30% of people who visited an urban emergency department said the doctors did not listen to them
Or only listened to a certain extent.***

37% of urban respondents found the ER waiting room extremely or very crowded.

(Health Quality Council of Alberta, Emergency Department Patient Experience Survey highlights.)

Between 9, 250 – 20,750 hospital patients died of avoidable deaths in Canada in 2000.

(The Globe and Mail, March 18, 2008)

The Alberta Government allocates 12.3 billion to Health.

(Alberta Government News Release – June 24, 2008)

Our **Research, Policy and Government Liaison Committee** have also been very active over the past year. We have had meetings with the following individuals to discuss health care issues and give our recommendations on how to improve health care:

Eileen Bell, Regional Manager - Patient Concerns, Calgary Health Region
Joanne Stalinski, Senior Vice President - Wellness, Calgary Health Region
Sharon Nettleton, Project Leader - Quality, Safety & Health Information, Calgary Health Region
Dr. Cowell, President & CEO - HQCA (Health Quality Council of Alberta)
Prudence Taylor, Executive Director of Strategic Development in Health & Wellness, Alberta Government
Olesia Luciw-Adrijowycz, Manager, Health System Quality Health Services - Strategy Development Branch
Dr. Bob Johnston - Former Vice President, Calgary Health Region
Honorable Ron Liepert - Minister of Health & Wellness, Alberta Government

Our Treasurer has finalized setting up all our books in an accounting program and has established a bank account for Open Arms.

Open Arms gave presentations to Friends of Medicare, Health Quality Council of Alberta and Calgary Health Region Patient Safety Council.

The highlights of our lobby efforts for 2007 – 2008 include:

Government:

Establish an Independent Review Committee and/or Independent Appeals Committee to review an adverse medical event that results in death, near death or disability.

Establish a Navigational Medical Team that assists patients who have slipped through the cracks and have not received the proper medical attention. As well, to assist these patients in navigating through the medical system.

Establish performance measures for the hospitals in order to evaluate the efficiency by Government Health Region Board and Health Region Executives. The criteria setup of measuring devices may include: financial, emergency wait times, mental health accessibility, complaint process, patient satisfaction etc.

To have 50% of the Board of Directors appointed and 50% elected. This will show more credibility towards the Board. It will be better received by the public and will allow our democratic system to prevail.

Open Arms will be venturing into two areas that need attention, Mental Health and Senior Care. Both of these areas need our attention because they are in critical shape in Alberta.

Most importantly, we will continue to take on more clients who have experienced an adverse medical event and assist them by:

Supporting patients and families who have experienced a medical tragedy or adverse event.

Assisting patients and families to obtain the answers and closure they require from the medical community.

Liaising with the medical community and government to bring systematic changes to the Alberta Health Care system.

Our current Board of Directors consists of 12 Directors and the following advisors:

2 Physicians

2 Mal-Practice Lawyers

1 Psychiatrist

1 Former Calgary Health Region Employee

Below are the Executives and Committee Chairpersons along with their contact information. Please feel free to contact any Director at the following email address: (underscore follows the first two letters in email addresses)

Chairperson

Rick Lundy

ri_lundy@openarmsadvocacy.com

Co-Chairperson

Linda O'Donoghue li_odonoghue@openarmsadvocacy.com
Treasurer
Penny Thiessen pe_thiessen@openarmsadvocacy.com
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Rick Lundy ri_lundy@openarmsadvocacy.com
Membership Committee
Rose Lundy ro_lundy@openarmsadvocacy.com
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Melissa Lalonde me_lalonde@openarmsadvocacy.com

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Open Arms,

We thank you for your continuing support.

*Remember, it is organizations like Open Arms
That will force changes and improvements
To the Alberta Health Care System.*

Thank you!

*The Board of Directors
Open Arms Patient Advocacy Society.*