

RHAs: a decade in review

By Kimberly Ballance, AMM Senior Policy Analyst

The Regional Health Authority (RHA) system in Manitoba is coordinated through the department of Manitoba Health. Manitoba made the decision to regionalize the administration and delivery of health care in 1996, and currently eight provinces have regionalized health services. Manitoba Health continues to organize a broad range of services and programs that are delivered through the 11 RHAs.

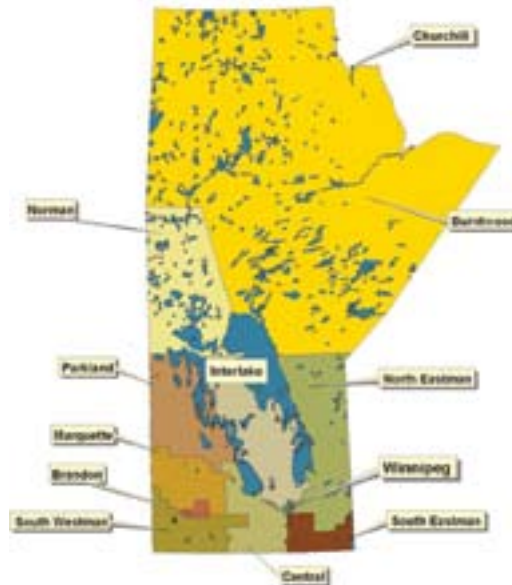
The decision to alter health care planning and delivery in Manitoba was a major change to the previous health structure. This model of health care put the responsibility in the hands of RHAs within a provincial policy framework. It allowed for the assessment and prioritization of health goals in a region while maintaining an integrated approach to the delivery of local services.

The RHAs are all structured slightly differently, however they tend to follow the same general formation. Each RHA is governed by a Board of Directors made up of representatives from the region. They communicate with their regional RHA Chief Executive Officer, who is responsible to direct information to program directors in areas specific to each RHA such as Community Health Services, Support Services, Facility Services, Programs and Standards, Chief Financial Officer, Human Resource Planning, Communications/Public Relations, Primary Care and Medical Services.

The Board and CEO also work closely with District Health Advisory Councils, Medical Advisory Councils and other stakeholder groups. Services and programs provided in each RHA are listed on their websites, but cover a large variety of health issues. Some services offered by RHAs include: primary health care, public health services, emergency medical services, audiology, community health offices, diabetes services, diagnostics, dietitians, handi-transit, public health promotion, home care, long term care, mental health services, palliative care, seniors resources, speech and language services, telehealth, and travel health information.

Ten years after changing to the current method of health care delivery, the RHA model is undergoing public scrutiny through a full external review. On April 10, Health Minister **Theresa Oswald** announced that an external review of the province's RHA system would be completed to make recommendations for improving health services.

The legislation responsible for RHAs is *The Regional Health Authorities Act*, created in 1996, which sets out the framework for RHA incorporation and defines the duties and responsibilities of RHAs and the Minister of Health. Together, the Minister of Health and the RHAs work to develop health policy, assess health status and ensure health planning and service delivery.



All RHAs and residents of Manitoba stand to benefit from the independent review, which aims to ensure that approaches to patient care continue to be modernized and improved while making the system effective and cost efficient. The mandate of the external review is to make recommendations to the Ministers of Health and Healthy Living on how to further enhance RHAs in the future.

Areas that have been targeted for review include: the RHA model, administration, accountability, opportunities for enhanced patient care, community participation and response to local needs. The external review committee will make recommendations to the Ministers of Health and Healthy Living by December 2007. This report will assist in guiding improvements to the delivery of health services in Manitoba.

If you wish to make a submission about the RHA system to the external review committee you can do so by sending a submission, by August 22, 2007, to:

RHA Review Committee
PO BOX 48065 RPO Lakewood,
Winnipeg, MB R2J 4A3
E-mail: rhareview@shaw.ca

RHA websites

- Assiniboine Regional Health Authority - <http://www.assiniboine-rha.ca/>
- Brandon Regional Health Authority - <http://www.brandonrha.mb.ca/en/>
- Burntwood Regional Health Authority - <http://www.thompson.ca/dbs/brha/>
- Churchill RHA Inc. - www.churchillrha.mb.ca
- Interlake Regional Health Authority - www.irha.mb.ca
- NOR-MAN Regional Health Authority - www.norman-rha.mb.ca
- North Eastman Health Authority - www.neha.mb.ca
- Parkland Regional Health Authority - www.prha.mb.ca
- Regional Health Authority - Central Manitoba Inc. - www.rha-central.mb.ca
- South Eastman Health/Santé Sud-Est Inc. - www.sehealth.mb.ca
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority - www.wrha.mb.ca