

**PUBLIC INTEREST ALBERTA'S
13TH ANNUAL ADVOCACY CONFERENCE**



Public Interest Alberta
Advocating for a Better Alberta for All

April 4 & 5, 2019
Chateau Louis Hotel and Conference Centre
Edmonton, Alberta

WELCOME

As was the case in 2015, our advocacy conference this year is occurring in the midst of Alberta's provincial election. The timing provides an excellent opportunity for progressive individuals and organizations to focus together on what needs to be done in the immediate future, and on actions that will be necessary in the coming months and years.

Our conference theme is centred on vital issues related to our public services, which have not had much public attention in a long election lead-up where political parties have focused on pipelines, the oil industry, and the economy.

This conference instead offers opportunities to learn about, discuss, and make decisions about advocacy on issues which deserve a much closer look: health care, K-12 and post-secondary education, child care and early learning, poverty, seniors' care, and environmental concerns.

At the heart of the discussions are two central questions about our public services:

How can we not only protect but strengthen and expand our public services in these challenging times?

How can we generate enough revenue through fair taxation so that we can pay for our public services in sustainable ways?

The day after the 2019 provincial election, and regardless of the outcome, these two questions will be at the heart of the ongoing concerns and advocacy by all of us.

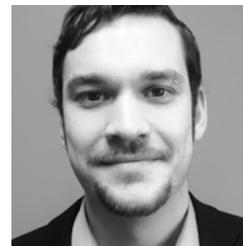
This conference is designed to provide both insights and opportunities to collectively develop advocacy efforts that will make a difference in the years ahead.

The conference is the result of a great deal of efforts and support by progressive individuals and organizations. We want to thank our conference financial supporters (who are listed in the programme,) conference committee, speakers, facilitators, board of directors and member organizations, staff, and our hard-working volunteers for making it all possible.

In the end, the success of the conference depends on the presence and active engagement of those in attendance. We encourage you to make the most of the opportunity work with others who share your values, commitments and concerns, and to focus on the concrete ways that we can work together to advocate for a better Alberta for all. We thank you for your continuing support and your advocacy efforts.



Larry Booi
Board Chair
Public Interest Alberta



Joel French
Executive Director
Public Interest Alberta

SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

1:30 PM REGISTRATION

2:00 PM

Welcome & Introductory Remarks

2:00 PM WORKSHOP

Advocacy to Reduce and Eliminate Poverty in Alberta

5:00 PM BREAK

No dinner will be provided; list of nearby restaurants available upon request

6:30 PM REGISTRATION

7:00 PM

Welcome & Introductory Remarks

7:00 PM KEYNOTE

Becoming Builders: Proactive Advocacy for the Public Good

Trish Hennessy, Upstream

8:30 PM

Reception & Cash Bar

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

8:30 AM REGISTRATION

9:00 AM

Welcome & Conference Overview

9:00 AM KEYNOTE

Privatisation & Austerity: Lessons from the UK

Allyson Pollock, Newcastle University Institute of Health & Society

10:30 AM BREAK

10:40 AM PANEL

Just Transition and a Green New Deal for Canada

Panelists: Ty, Stephen Buhler

Moderator: Emma Jackson

12:00 PM LUNCH (Will be provided)

1:00 PM KNOWMADIC (poet)

1:20 PM PANEL

Bold Ideas for Expanding our Public Services

Panelists: Paige Gorsak, Alvin Finkel Moderator: Michael Janz

2:20 PM BREAK

2:30 PM WORKSHOPS

4:00 PM PANEL

The Past and Future of Fighting for Strong Public Service

Panelists: Heather Smith, Elizabeth Ballerman

Moderator: Joel French

5:00 PM CLOSING REMARKS

Thursday, April 4 at 2PM

WORKSHOP

Advocacy to Reduce and Eliminate Poverty in Alberta

Join advocates and activists from across the province to discuss the current context of poverty in Alberta, as well as discuss solutions to eliminate poverty.

Alberta has made significant progress over the past few years on reducing poverty through meaningful actions by government. However, significant levels of poverty remain, and more action is needed. This workshop is designed to equip advocates and activists who are passionate about addressing poverty with knowledge about the problem of poverty and to chart a path forward for how we can reduce and eliminate poverty in Alberta.

Workshop Leaders



SARAH BARBER received her M.Sc in Health Promotion from UAlberta's School of Public Health and has over 16 years of experience in evaluation framework design, tool development, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analyses and evaluation capacity building within government and in the community. Sarah approaches evaluation with a 'nothing about us without us' lens.



RICARDO ACUÑA has been the Executive Director of the Parkland Institute since 2002. Previously, he worked for nine years as Projects Coordinator for Change for Children Association, an Alberta-based international development organization working in Latin America. He has spoken extensively and written on energy policy, democracy, privatization, and the Alberta economy, and is a regular media commentator on public policy issues.



SANDRA NGO is currently the co-chair of the Edmonton Food Council and the Research Coordinator for the Edmonton Social Planning Council where she uses data and research storytelling and advocating for those struggling with poverty. She is a key part of UAlberta's ENRICH project which designed security programming that serves immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeking families.



SANDRA AZOCAR has been an advocate for a fair and equal society for more than 30 years in Alberta. Her past experience includes working as a child protection worker. She has served as the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) Vice-President from 2007-2012. Sandra had also served on the Board of Directors of Friends of Medicare for 6 years prior to becoming the Executive Director in 2012.



NEVENA IVANOVIC is the Public Policy Coordinator at the Women's Centre of Calgary, where she works to bring a gender lens and women's experiences to policy discussions. Nevena researches and advocates for social policies that address the unique way women are affected by, and are vulnerable to, poverty and economic insecurity.



NICKI DUBLENKO has worked with the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta over the past few years to work toward a future of well educated and recognized early childhood educators in Alberta. She is currently enrolled in the flex Early Learning and Care PhD program at the University of Toronto and serves as the Executive Director for Child Development Dayhomes, Edmonton and Fort McMurray.

Thursday, April 4 at 7PM

KEYNOTE

Becoming Builders: Proactive Advocacy for the Public Good

With Trish Hennessy

Progressives have become excellent firefighters: when we see our public services being attacked, we know how to defend them.

However, we need to become better builders, focused on revitalizing and expanding public services and spaces for the betterment of everyone in our society.

Join us for Trish Hennessy's keynote address which will explore ways to collectively envision a brighter and more equitable future focused on building healthy, educated, and engaged communities.

About Trish Hennessy



TRISH HENNESSY is the executive director of Upstream. She was the founding director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' (CCPA) Ontario office, which focuses on income inequality, decent work, and the role of government from a provincial and municipal perspective. She co-founded and directed the CCPA's national project examining income inequality in Canada. She also co-founded the Ontario Living Wage Network.

KEYNOTE

Privatisation and Austerity: Lessons from the UK

With Allyson Pollock, Newcastle University Institute of Health & Society

In the decade since 2008, Austerity has seen gains in infant mortality and life expectancy plateauing and now reversing; poverty is increasing as are inequalities in health.

Austerity has been accompanied by a twin track policy of cuts in public services and privatization with catastrophic consequences for public health and public accountability. There is no evidence that the efficiency gains have materialised but rather that fragmentation and outsourcing are increasing levels of stress decreasing access to services.

About Allyson Pollock



PROFESSOR ALLYSON POLLOCK

is director of the Institute of Health & Society at Newcastle University. A public health physician, she is a leading authority on the fundamental principles of universal health systems, marketisation and public private partnerships, and international trade law and health. Her current research is around access to medicines, pharmaceutical regulation, and public health; and child and sports injury. Her book NHS plc: the privatisation of our health care was published by Verso, and she is currently working on a book An Anthem for the NHS.

Friday, April 5 at 9AM

PANEL

Just Transition and a Green New Deal for Canada

Panelists: Emma Jackson, Stephen Buhler, and Ty

While it is widely accepted that fossil fuels must be phased out and replaced by renewable forms of energy, elected officials are stalling progress.

The transition must happen much more quickly to respect climate science, and at the same time must be done in a way that considers the impact on those most affected: workers in the fossil fuels sector who deserve good jobs and Indigenous peoples who have often borne the brunt of the negative impacts of fossil fuel extraction. This session will explore how we can build a just transition to a 100% renewable energy economy in Alberta and across Canada in a way that upholds Indigenous rights, expands racial justice, and guarantees good work to everyone.

Panelists



STEPHEN BUHLER is a 28 year old journeyman machinist and an activist with Climate Justice Edmonton. He has been working in the oil and gas sector for over 10 years, and has always known that change to a low carbon future is on the horizon for the industry. He has moved from the sidelines to join activists and help lift up voices of working people in the climate movement.



TY is Nehiyâw from Onitcikiskiponihk and Anishinaabe from Muskowekan. He is Eagle Clan. Ty is a spoken-word poet and believes that Indigenous freedom from Canadian authoritarian rule is possible through art, community and direct action. As an Indigenous hunter, Ty has an intimate connection with the land, understanding how important it is to protect water, land, and life.

Moderator



Recent MA in Sociology grad **EMMA JACKSON** is a co-founder and organizer with Climate Justice Edmonton and a national field organizer with 350 Canada. Born on unceded Algonquin Anishinabe territory in Ottawa, ON, she grew up in the Canadian labour movement and first got involved in organizing through fossil fuel divestment at Mount Allison University.

Friday, April 5 at 1:00PM

PERFORMANCE

Knowmadic



Edmonton Poet Laureate Ahmed Ali, better known as **KNOWMADIC**, is a multi disciplinary artist, community organizer, public speaker and youth worker who has dedicated his time to enabling and empowering diverse communities around the world. He is also the co-founder and artistic director of the collective Breath in Poetry.

Friday, April 5 at 1:20PM

PANEL

Bold Ideas for Expanding our Public Services

Panelists: Paige Gorsak and Alvin Finkel

Moderator: Michael Janz

It is sometimes tempting for progressives to think short-term and focus on gains for public services that seem possible immediately.

However, too often compromises made at the outset limit the possibilities for change, both in the short-term and beyond. Bold, unapologetic advocacy for expanding public services motivates activists and advocates, and can result in big gains that wouldn't otherwise be possible. This session will feature examples of the positive impact of bold advocacy on public services in Alberta and around the world.

Panelists



PAIGE GORSAK is a community organizer and public library worker. She's an active member in her union (CSU52), a graduate student at UAlberta in Gender and Social Justice, and an organizer with Climate Justice Edmonton. In Fall 2018, Paige ran to become the Federal NDP candidate in Edmonton-Strathcona on a bold platform calling for a just transition to 100% renewable energy, free education from daycare to post-secondary, universal pharmacare, and more. Having lost the nomination, she's back to the grassroots, fighting for change with and within her community.



ALVIN FINKEL's writing credits include 13 history books such as *Compassion: A Global History of Social Policy*, *Working People in Alberta: A History*, and more. He is president of the Alberta Labour History Institute, professor emeritus of History at Athabasca University, co-author of the blog *Change Alberta*, and a frequent contributor to *Alberta Views*.

Moderator



MICHAEL JANZ lives to promote education, literacy and community. He is in his third term on the Board of Trustees and has previously served as Edmonton Public School Board Chair and Vice-Chair. Michael is passionate about the importance of public education and is an advocate for life-long learning. In 2016, Michael was voted *Vue Weekly's* Edmonton's Best School Trustee.

Friday, April 5 at 2:30PM

WORKSHOPS

Environment & Just Transition

Commercial Room

Poverty & Child Care

Executive Room

K-12 Education

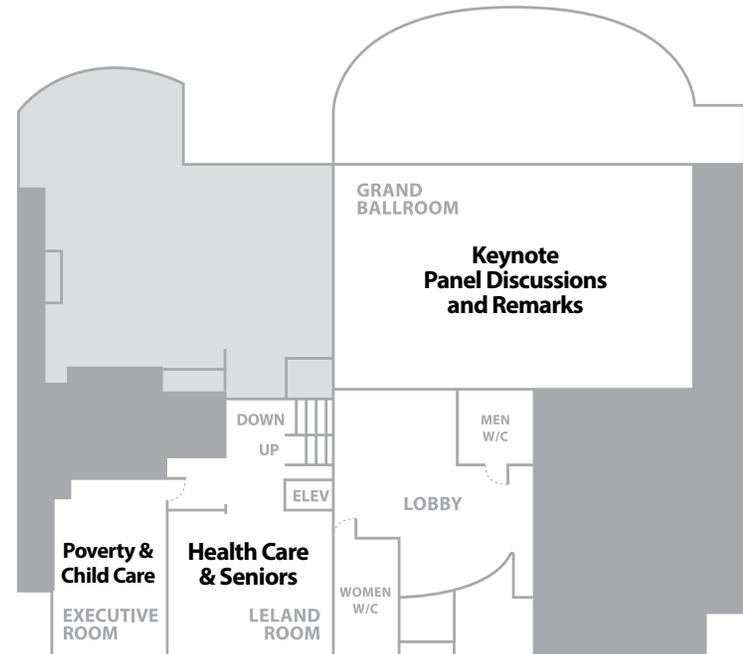
Rosslyn Room

Post-Secondary Education

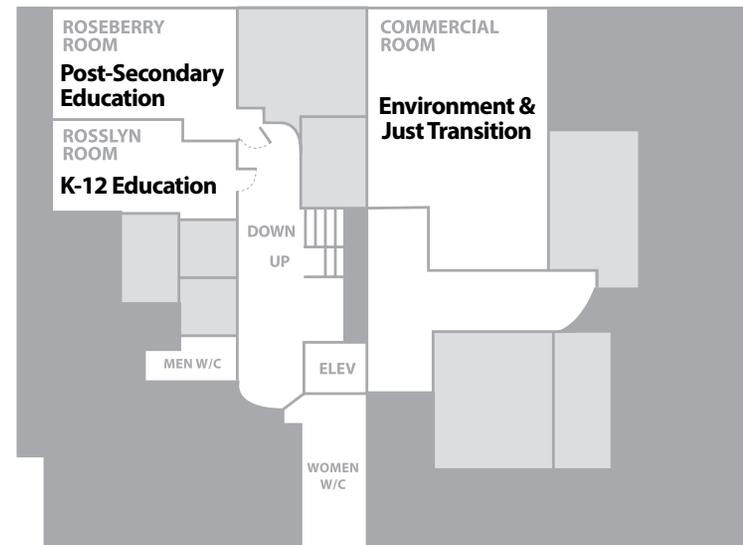
Roseberry Room

Health Care & Seniors

Leland Room



Main Floor: Level 3
Upper Floor: Level 4



Lower Floor: Level 2
Bottom Floor: Level 1

Friday, April 5 at 1:20PM

PANEL

The Past and Future of Fighting for Strong Public Services

Panelists: Heather Smith and Elisabeth Ballermann

Moderator: Joel French

Progressives in Alberta have fought and won many battles in the past, and the challenges we face, in many ways, are not unique.

Experiences in our province and across the country show us how to engage in effective coalition-building and advocacy, regardless of the political leanings of the government of the day. Two of Alberta's iconic progressive leaders will conclude the conference with a message that reflects on the lessons of the past and points the way forward for the future.

Panelists



HEATHER SMITH is President of the United Nurses of Alberta and a prominent advocate for Canada's universal public health care system and a national pharmacare program. Elected as UNA president in 1988, she has served in that role ever since. She received the Spirit of Tommy Douglas Award in 2007 for her commitment to the dreams of the late Saskatchewan premier and creator of Canadian medicare.



ELISABETH BALLERMANN is the Secretary-Treasurer of the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE). She has been a labour activist most of her working life, and is a staunch advocate for social justice and the public health system.. From 1995 to 2016, Ballermann was President of Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA). Her work has been recognized with several awards, including the Alberta Centennial Medal.

Moderator



JOEL FRENCH is the Executive Director of Public Interest Alberta, a position he has held since 2015. He previously served as the organization's Communications Coordinator and has also served in staff positions with Friends of Medicare and former Alberta NDP Leader Brian Mason.

He also currently serves in positions that help guide the work of the Parkland Institute, the Next Up youth leadership program, and the Alberta Green Economy Network.

THANK YOU

Conference Planning Committee

A special thank you to this year's conference planning committee for their hard work in the lead-up to this year's conference.

LARRY BOOI

Public Interest Alberta

ALYSSA PRETTY

Friends of Medicare

SUSAN SLADE

Alberta Union of Public Employees

KAREN WERLIN

MONICA WALKER

Public Interest Alberta

CHRIS GALLAWAY

Alberta Federation of Labour

LAURA KRUSE

Public Interest Alberta

MIKE PARKER

Health Sciences Association of Alberta

JOEL FRENCH

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A huge thank you to all our volunteers, speakers, and moderators for helping to make this year's conference a success!



Public Interest Alberta
Advocating for a Better Alberta for All

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