

What's in a Name—and Why We Are Proposing a Change through Special Resolution

Executive Summary

Proposed Name Change for the Edmonton Epilepsy Association

The Edmonton Epilepsy Association (EEA) was established in 1960 as a chapter of United Way Canada, Edmonton branch. For many decades, the Association focused primarily on supporting individuals connected to Edmonton hospitals that treat epilepsy. As our work expanded, we added the tagline “*Northern Alberta Epilepsy Association*” to reflect our broader regional reach.

Today, advances in technology and service delivery have significantly expanded our ability to support individuals across a much larger geographic area. As a result, the Board is proposing that members consider a name change that more accurately reflects where we operate, whom we serve, and how we position ourselves for future growth.

Why a Name Change Was Considered

The Board recommended this change for the following reasons:

- To better reflect the **actual region we directly support**, including individuals connected to Edmonton's major epilepsy treatment centres, such as the Stollery Children's Hospital and the Kaye Clinic.
- To ensure that **all members and community participants feel represented** in the Association's name, regardless of where they live in Alberta (north of Red Deer).
- To incorporate our **regional scope into our legal name**, rather than relying on a secondary tagline.
- To strengthen access to **local and regional funding opportunities**, as many grant-makers and sponsors assess eligibility based on how clearly an organization's name aligns with its service area.
- To support a new phase of growth that may include the creation of **local executive committees** focused on fundraising, education, awareness, and region-specific projects.

The Board also notes that a province-wide name cannot be adopted, as a Calgary-based organization already serves southern Alberta, and respect for regional service boundaries must be maintained.

Considerations Regarding “Northern Alberta”

There is no single, universally accepted definition of “Northern Alberta.” Local, government, and industry perspectives vary, and the term does not automatically include Edmonton. However, from a health services perspective, Edmonton is the primary hub for northern Alberta epilepsy care. Any proposed name must balance geographic accuracy, clarity, and inclusiveness.

Why We Embraced a Name Change?

The name of our charity, **The Edmonton Epilepsy Association (EEA)**, reflects our roots. The Association was established in 1960 as a chapter of United Way Canada, Edmonton branch. At that time—and for many decades thereafter—EEA focused primarily on supporting individuals directly connected to Edmonton hospitals that treat epilepsy.

Over the years, we added the tagline “**Northern Alberta Epilepsy Association**” to emphasize our broader regional impact and the geographic area we serve through our awareness, education, advocacy, and fundraising efforts.

Today, our world and region are far more interconnected. Advances in technology have reduced barriers and increased our ability to serve individuals across a much larger geographic area. As a result, we wish to explore a name change that more accurately reflects where we operate and whom we serve, while also opening doors to new funding opportunities.

Rationale for Bringing This Forward to the Membership

- To adopt a name that more accurately reflects the **region we directly support**, including individuals connected to Edmonton’s major hospitals—namely the **Stollery Children’s Hospital** and the **Kaye Clinic**.
- To ensure that everyone who joins our community feels **represented by the Association’s name**, regardless of where they live in Alberta (north of Red Deer).
- To incorporate **regional coverage into our legal name**, rather than relying on a secondary tagline.
- To open doors to **new funding opportunities**, including local and regional grants and corporate sponsorships, which often assess applications based on how clearly an organization’s name reflects its service area.

- To enter a new phase in our history by introducing, through a special resolution at the February 2026 AGM, the opportunity to establish **local executive committees**. These committees could organize fundraising, awareness, and education initiatives, and apply for grants supporting **local projects** delivered through in-person, online, and hybrid formats.
 - To remain mindful that we **cannot adopt a province-wide name** (e.g., *Epilepsy Association of Alberta*), as a Calgary-based charity serves southern Alberta. We must remain respectful of the region they directly support.
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Considerations When Selecting a New Name

How “Northern Alberta” Is Defined

To inform our discussion, it is important to recognize that “Northern Alberta” does not have a single, universally accepted definition.

1. Local Perspective

This is the broadest and most informal definition.

- Often interpreted as “north of Edmonton”
- Emphasizes lived experience: colder weather, longer travel distances, fewer services, and close-knit communities
- Edmonton is usually considered **central**, not northern
- Fort McMurray, Peace Country, and communities near the Northwest Territories border are clearly considered “north”

In short: If it feels remote and winter feels harsher, locals tend to call it Northern Alberta.

2. Government Perspective

More formal and boundary-based, but inconsistent across departments.

- Alberta Health, education, and economic regions use different boundaries
- Some frameworks divide the province into North, Central, and South
- Others distinguish between “Lower North” and “Upper North”
- Edmonton may be excluded or treated as its own region

In short: Northern Alberta exists on maps—but which map is used matters.

3. Industry Perspective (Especially Energy and Forestry)

Highly practical and job focused.

- Typically refers to oil sands, forestry, mining, and gas regions
- Fort McMurray, Cold Lake, Grande Prairie, and High Level are core areas
- Edmonton is viewed as a southern hub or staging city, not “north”
- “Northern” often implies fly-in/fly-out work, camps, and shift rotations

In short: Northern Alberta is where the work sites are.

Big-Picture Takeaway

“Northern Alberta” is not a single, fixed place—it is a blend of geography, economy, and identity. Where the “north” begins, and what it represents, depends on who is speaking.

In other words, the term “**Northern Alberta**” **does not automatically include Edmonton**. From a health services perspective, however, our work is centered around major hospitals in **Edmonton (Northern Alberta)** and **Calgary (Southern Alberta)**. With this in mind, we are proposing the following name options:
