



2023 ONTARIO PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION





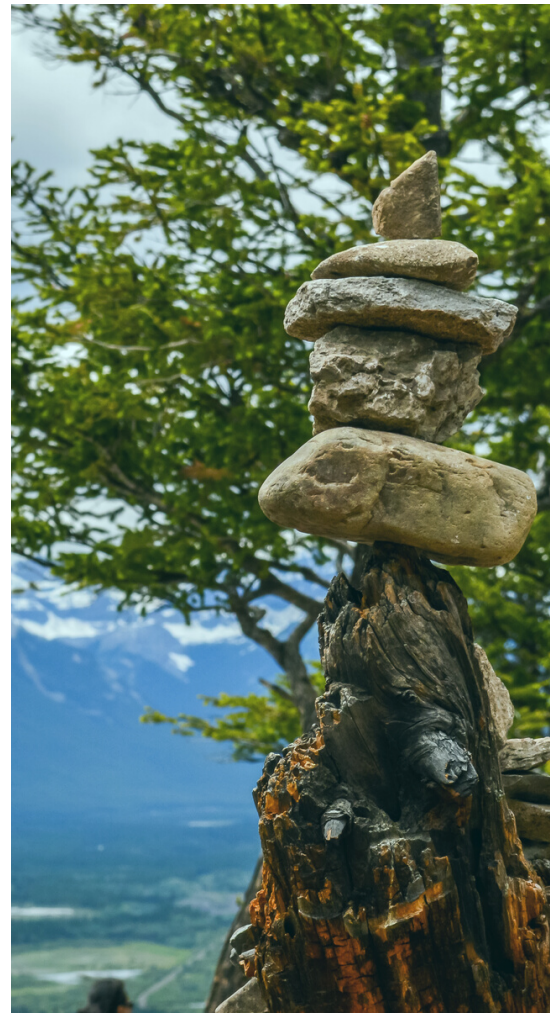
Provincial Investments Needed to Meaningfully Advance Truth & Reconciliation Health Care Calls to Action for Indigenous Peoples in Ontario, no matter where they reside

The Indigenous Primary Health Care Council is pleased to provide our 2023 pre-budget submission to Ontario's Ministry of Finance.

The disparities in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada are well documented.¹² The disparities in access to basic social determinants of health such as proper housing, job security, nutritious food, clean drinking water, education and access to health care services have also been extensively acknowledged within academic literature and government reports. Individuals, communities, and nations that experience inequalities in the social determinants of health not only carry an additional burden of health disparities, but they are often restricted from access to resources that are required to ameliorate inequalities. Indigenous Peoples across this nation have experienced social, economic, and political disadvantages through colonialism, and the provincial health care system is one important and necessary system level influence that must be used as a lever for meaningful action toward reconciliation and healing.



According to Statistics Canada, there are 406,590 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FNIM) Peoples residing in Ontario, the highest of any province within Canada and the Indigenous population grew by 9.4% from 2016 to 2021, almost twice the pace of growth of the non-Indigenous population over the same period (+5.3%). It is also important to note that a Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care report from 2018 reported that approximately 85.5% of FNIM People identified in Ontario live off reserve and a growing number of Indigenous Peoples are residing in urban settings throughout the province. Investments in culturally safe and appropriate health care services are needed for all Indigenous Peoples, no matter where they reside in the province. Proper investments will not only support the current generation but will also have a lasting impact toward restoring balance, culture, and overall improved health outcomes for the next seven generations.



The Indigenous Primary Health Care Council (IPHCC) is an Indigenous-governed, Indigenous-led, culture-based organization. It was established to support the advancement and evolution of Indigenous primary health care service provisions and planning in Ontario, through partnerships, education, and advocacy. As the only provincially funded entity with primary health care service organization members across the province providing Indigenous-led care to FNIM People, no matter where they reside in the province, IPHCC is prepared to work with the Ontario Government and is calling for immediate investments.

These investments will contribute to the needed access to culturally safe primary health care services, and facilitate Indigenous involvement in the planning, design, delivery, and evaluation of health services. It will also enable Indigenous participation in the government's most significant health system transformation effort in years, Ontario Health Teams.

Meaningful investments and resource allocation into Indigenous communities will enhance culturally specific capacity building efforts, including support for Traditional Healing, which is necessary to bring equity relative to the investments in mainstream supports for OHTs.

IPHCC is calling on the Provincial Government to invest \$112 million over the next five years.

- 1** Invest **\$37 million over three years** to support a Provincial Indigenous Integrated Health Hub. This proposed Hub will build capacity and supports to successfully integrate and involve Indigenous perspectives and peoples in the ongoing rollout of Ontario Health Teams. This Hub will also build the infrastructure, resources, and engagement strategies that are needed to ensure FNIM People are directly involved in self-determined planning, design, delivery, and evaluation of provincial health care planning for Indigenous Peoples.
- 2** Expand equitable access to primary health care by investing **\$75 million annualized over five-years**. The investment will continue to build on a provincial network of Indigenous Primary Health Care Organizations, moving beyond the initial phase of development. Equitable access to Indigenous primary health care is critical to address disparities in Indigenous health outcomes. Improving access to primary health care across the province will also ease the burden on an already overstretched hospital system and strengthen the ability to keep people within their own home and communities.

To support these investments and to fully realize equitable health for Ontario's Indigenous populations, these actions must be addressed.

1. Provincial Indigenous Integrated Health Hub: Enabling self-determined Indigenous health care planning and aligning with provincial health system transformation priorities.

ISSUE: There is currently no coordinated provincial planning for Indigenous health care needs. The capacity and efforts being undertaken across the health system is variable in terms of working with Indigenous communities and bringing an Indigenous lens to planning and service delivery. Ontario Health Teams are not consistent in their engagement and involvement of Indigenous perspectives and peoples in their planning, which is critical to realize any sustained success. It is essential that Indigenous Peoples have access to the resources and supports they need to advance self-determined health system planning and implementation that is needed to maintain their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.



SOLUTION: Invest in the development of a Provincial Indigenous Integrated Health Hub. Develop sustainable resources and infrastructure to provide capacity building supports for Indigenous-led primary health care organizations, and to provide support to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and Ontario Health with system resources and supports related to approaches to Indigenous health care delivery. Cultural safety is an outcome relevant to meaningful Indigenous approaches to health care delivery, based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances rooted within the health care system. It results in an environment accountable to addressing racism and discrimination, where people report feeling safe when receiving health care.

As the health system evolves, it is critical that there are appropriate pathways in place to ensure the safety and well-being of Indigenous Peoples is at the forefront, including implementing accountability standards for health care providers to participate in Indigenous Cultural Safety training and workshops.

This Hub will also be one important avenue to facilitate the dialogue and true and equal partnership that is needed to help bring together the Ministry of Health, Ontario Health, as well as the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs, Indigenous-governed and Indigenous-led health delivery organizations, inclusive of First Nations, Inuit and Métis associations and urban representation across the province. This Hub will further the provincial governments commitment to “recognize the role of Indigenous Peoples in the planning, design, delivery, and evaluation of health services in their communities” (Connecting Care Act, 2019).

2. Provincial Network of Indigenous Primary Health Care: Building on a province-wide network of access to primary health care services.

ISSUE: Team-based primary health care results in better health outcomes, better patient service and satisfaction and more efficient use of precious health system resources. Yet only 25% of people living in Ontario have access to these funded team-based resources. Further, Indigenous populations have even greater gaps in access to these culturally appropriate and safe resources, which have been proven to lead to improved health outcomes. While progress has been made to ensure 21 IPHCC-IPHCOs are available in many communities, there remains a gap in access to culturally safe primary health care for Indigenous populations in many communities. It is well documented that FNIM populations have difficulty accessing timely and culturally safe healthcare and have poorer health outcomes than non-Indigenous people living in Ontario.

SOLUTION: Increase access for Indigenous Peoples to culturally safe, Indigenous-led primary health care by funding a more comprehensive provincial network of Indigenous Primary Health Care Organizations (IPHCOs), using a population health management approach rooted within the integrated model of Wholistic Health and Well-Being.



Providing funding to build a more comprehensive network of IPHCOs is critical to ensure appropriate and timely access to primary health care services, rather than having to seek this care in emergency departments or delaying care, which may result in more significant acute health issues. The \$75M investment, annualized over five-years, will be used to:

- Expand existing IPHCOs primary health care teams in order to meet demand
- Develop satellite sites for existing IPHCOs
- Develop new Indigenous Primary Health Care Organizations in order to fulfill gap areas
- Increase physicians from the current two full-time equivalents (FTEs) where needed
- Increase midwifery services so that it is available across the province
- Enhance required cultural program supports in existing IPHCOs to address primary health care needs

This investment toward Indigenous-led primary health care delivery is in addition to the needed investments and action outlined in the Primary Care Collaborative 2023 Pre-Budget Submission, including a 10-year, \$750 million funding strategy to ensure all people residing in Ontario have access to team-based primary care when needed.

Ontario Government Role in Indigenous Health Care

While we understand that the Federal Government plays a critical role in funding Indigenous communities across the nation, and we support the provinces in their united call for the Federal Government to increase the Canada Health Transfer, we also urge the Provincial Government to make immediate and adequate investments in Indigenous health-care spending to ensure gaps in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people living in Ontario begin to close. The two funding requests presented here are specific to funding that is needed to ensure Indigenous Primary Health Care Organizations and the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council are equipped to meaningfully participate in the government's health transformation efforts and ensure Indigenous-led resources and supports are developed to reduce inequities experienced by FNIM Peoples across the province.

IPHCC is ready to work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples in Ontario and the Provincial Government to build an Ontario that helps all Indigenous Peoples succeed and thrive. The return on these investments will be important steps toward tangible action needed to make a lasting impact for generations.



Citations

[1] Park, J. (2021, October 20). Mortality among First Nations people, 2006 to 2016. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-003-x/2021010/article/00001-eng.htm>

[2] Kim P. J. (2019). Social Determinants of Health Inequities in Indigenous Canadians Through a Life Course Approach to Colonialism and the Residential School System. *Health equity*, 3(1), 378–381. <https://doi.org/10.1089/heq.2019.0041>

[3] Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. (2018, January 1). Relationship with Indigenous Communities Guideline, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/

[4] Alberta Medical Association. (2017, October). Evidence Summary: The Benefits of Relational Continuity in Primary Care. Retrieved from <https://actt.albertadoctors.org/file/Relational-Continuity-CPG.pdf>





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