



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
Healthy Families Division

TO:	Mayor and Members Public Health Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 16, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Public Health Services Indigenous Health Strategy (BOH23026) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Sue Connell (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3798 Terry Ramirez (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3820
SUBMITTED BY:	Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the Public Health Services Indigenous Health Strategy, attached as Appendix “A” to Public Health Committee Report BOH23026, be approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public Health Services worked with the Indigenous leaders and community in Hamilton to help inform a strategy to improve the health of Indigenous people in the City of Hamilton. Public Health Services conducted interviews with leaders of Indigenous organizations in Hamilton and nearby reserves. A survey was available to community members to share their insights. This report used responses from the interviews and surveys to provide recommendations for the Public Health Services Indigenous Health Strategy.

The recommendations have been categorized into the following themes:

1. Relationship Building;
2. Communication;
3. Staffing and Governance;
4. Collaboration and Co-Development;
5. Equitable and Safe Services;
6. Resources;
7. Advocacy; and,

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

8. Access to Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and Practices.

The findings from the survey and interviews provide the groundwork for Public Health Services to implement a strategy that honours the principles of friendship, mutual respect, and peace, as the Two Row Wampum agreement teaches. It is important to note that some recommendations are outside of the mandate of Public Health Services, while others are applicable to other health and social service organizations. This reinforces the need for a collaborative response across sectors to improve health outcomes for the Indigenous community.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Not Applicable.

Staffing: Not Applicable.

Legal: Not Applicable.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Public Health Services recognizes the inequities in the health of Indigenous people, and in 2019 an Indigenous Health Strategy Specialist position was created to support the integral work of improving health outcomes for Indigenous people.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The goal of public health is to improve and protect the health and well-being of the population and reduce health inequities (Ministry of Health, 2021). The Ontario Public Health Standards provide the legislated mandate for Public Health in Ontario. Within the Ontario Public Health Standards' "Working with Indigenous Communities Guideline", principles for engagement of Public Health with Indigenous communities are provided. These principles are: relationship building; recognition, respect and mutuality; self-determination; timely communication and knowledge exchange; and, coordination. These principles are key for reconciliation and must be a part of any work done with Indigenous communities.

In addition, the latest report from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer ("Being Ready: Ensuring Public Health Preparedness for Infectious Outbreaks and Pandemics", 2023) identifies additional action for the public health sector to address Indigenous Health. The Public Health Services Indigenous Health Strategy aligns with these actions.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Public Health Services worked with the Indigenous leaders and community in Hamilton to help inform a strategy to improve the health of Indigenous people in the City of Hamilton. Public Health Services conducted interviews with leaders of Indigenous organizations in Hamilton and nearby reserves. A survey was available to community members to share their insights. This report used responses from the interviews and surveys to provide recommendations for the Public Health Services Indigenous Health Strategy.

Indigenous leaders have approved this report and a release to the broader Indigenous community will take place later in 2023. The first step in this work is to establish an Indigenous health governance Circle to create an action-oriented plan. Such a plan can only be developed by engaging with Indigenous leaders and community from the very beginning. This plan will be co-developed and is expected to be completed by the end of 2024 to allow for fulsome engagement, consultation, and collaboration.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The findings from the survey and interviews provide the groundwork for Public Health Services to implement a strategy that honours the principles of friendship, mutual respect, and peace, as the Two Row Wampum agreement teaches. The Indigenous view of health and healing is wholistic and extends beyond physical health and the body to include the mind and spirit, and this view is reflected in the recommendations. It is important to note that some recommendations are outside of the mandate of Public Health Services, while others are applicable to other health and social service organizations. This reinforces the need for a collaborative response across sectors to improve health outcomes for the Indigenous community. The recommendations in the report are useful for other organizations and will be shared broadly.

The recommendations have been categorized into the following themes:

1. Relationship Building;
2. Communication;
3. Staffing and Governance;
4. Collaboration and Co-Development;
5. Equitable and Safe Services;
6. Resources;
7. Advocacy; and,
8. Access to Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and Practices.

Many of the recommendations align with key local, national, and international recommendations and calls to action. Appendix “B” to Report BOH23026 shows where there is alignment with the Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy, the Truth and

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Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. The recommendations also reflect many of the action areas identified in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Not Applicable.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report BOH23026	Public Health Services Indigenous Health Strategy Report June 2023
Appendix "B" to Report BOH23026	Public Health Services Indigenous Health Strategy Recommendations