



Hamilton

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES INDIGENOUS HEALTH STRATEGY

August 16, 2023

Background

- The Ontario Public Health Standards (2018) introduced the “Relationships with Indigenous Communities Guideline”
- The intent of the Guideline is to assist boards of health to:
 - Implement the requirements established in the Ontario Public Health Standards’ Health Equity Standard; and,
 - Engage in multi-sectoral collaboration with relevant stakeholders to decrease health inequities.
- The guideline provides boards of health with the fundamentals to begin forming meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities that come from a place of trust, mutual respect, understanding, and reciprocity

Background

- Hamilton Public Health Services is committed to effective engagement with the Indigenous Community in Hamilton.
- To provide guidance and direction for Public Health Services to meet the Ontario Public Health Standards through its programs and service delivery, an Indigenous Health Strategy Specialist position was created in 2018.

The role of this position is to:

- Engage and build relationships with local Indigenous leaders, health system and community partners; and,
- Plan, coordinate and lead strategic projects related to Indigenous health in-alignment with Hamilton's Urban Indigenous Strategy and the Ontario Public Health Standards to improve health outcomes and increase health equity for the Indigenous community

Work began to engage with the Indigenous Community to develop an Indigenous Health Strategy in 2019. This work was suspended due to COVID-19 and resumed in 2022.

Public Health Services Indigenous Health Strategy

Recognizing the importance of Self Determination, we looked to the Indigenous community for their direction for the strategy. Interviews were conducted with:

- Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leaders, Donna Gerber, Program Manager (Previous)
- De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre, Constance McKnight, Chief Executive Officer (Previous)
- Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, Audrey Davis, Executive Director
- McMaster University, Shylo Elmayan, Director Indigenous Student Services
- Mohawk College, Amy Kelaidis, Director and Special Advisor, Indigenous Initiatives
- NPAAMB Indigenous Youth Employment and Training, Shari St. Peter, Executive Director (Previous)
- Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg, Monique Lavelle, Executive Director
- Native Women's Centre, Paula Whitlow, Executive Director (Previous)
- Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, Justin Marchand, Executive Director
- Sacajawea Non-Profit Housing, Melanie McAuley, Executive Director
- Six Nations of The Grand River Territory
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
- Many other people who also participated in the interviews
- Indigenous Community members of Hamilton, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation that participated in the Interviews and the survey.

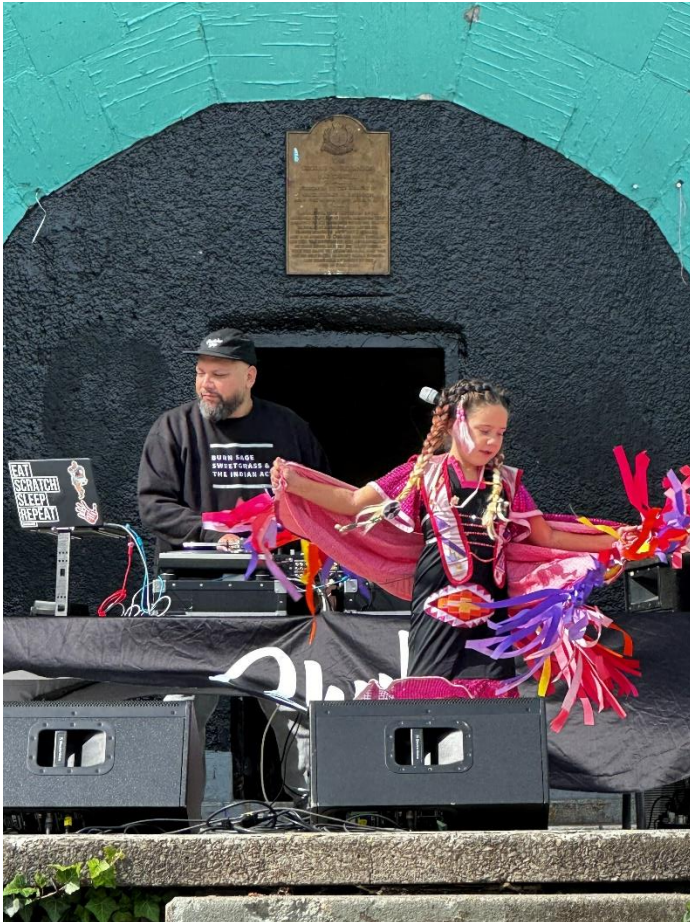
At the request of the leaders of the Indigenous organizations, a survey was also distributed to the Indigenous community to verify what the leaders were stating.

Public Health Services Indigenous Health Strategy Themes

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

Healthy Community



A healthy community is a “community helping to lift each other up...Because of colonization it has moved to ‘I’ and ‘me’, we need to move back to community.”

Relationship Building



Two Row Wampum Belt

Communication



Picture Source: <https://ehvi.org/joining-roots-sustaining-strength>

Staffing & Governance



Collaboration & Co-development

GAGE PARK OCTOBER 1, 2022 10AM - 5PM



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WAKYA'TA'SHATSE SOCIAL**

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AYSANABEE
BROTHERS WILDE
& LACEY HILL**

EMCEE: **CHERI MARACLE**
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MANITOU MKWA SINGERS
**OJIHGWAGA:YO
OLD MUSH SINGERS**

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DOOR PRIZES, FOOD, VENDORS, RAIN OR SHINE

As one participant shared, “[What is working well is] collaboration with services within the community – [we] have a good working relationship, respond to what is needed, and if we can’t, we try to find someone that can.”

Equitable & Safe Services



Image by Kevin Allaby

A healthy community has a holistic approach to mental, physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing for everyone. It is an equitable community, with safe spaces and freedom. The community is prosperous and has safe environmental spaces where people can gather. Full access to a range of resources. Culturally safe environments.

Resources



Advocacy

I would like to see them [Indigenous organizations] be equitable, funded in the same way so they can provide benefits, pensions and job security that they often do not get because the funding is different – it is less than... Turn over for Indigenous practitioners is high because the pay is way less (75%) and the benefits are not as appealing, less job security. This affects the relationship with clients – need the consistency and relationship for the clients to make any steps forward. It is difficult to build trust for people.



Equitable access to resources is essential – basics like unpolluted water, fresh air, healthy nutrition, connection to land base, feeling respected, secure, safe and valued.

Access to Indigenous Traditional Knowledge & Practices

As one participant expressed, we need to “change the perspective of the assumption that other people must do the healing on Indigenous people, that we need to be saved or helped, rather than empower our own abilities that we can heal ourselves.”



Reflections



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