



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

The Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy

Date:	May 10, 2016
To:	Board of Health
From:	Medical Officer of Health
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of Toronto's first Indigenous Health Strategy, 2016 – 2021 entitled, *A Reclamation of Well Being: Visioning a Thriving and Healthy Urban Indigenous Community*.

Toronto Public Health (TPH), Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (TC LHIN) and Anishnawbe Health Toronto (AHT) partnered to develop a community-led Toronto Indigenous Health Advisory Circle (TIHAC). The TIHAC has created the Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy (TIHS) to guide TPH and the TC LHIN, which represents the broader health system, in improving health outcomes in Toronto's Indigenous community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health endorse the Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy;
2. The Board of Health request that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:
 - a. Include TIHAC member(s) in the Ministry's Urban Aboriginal Health Table, as Toronto has Ontario's largest Indigenous population;
 - b. Ensure that urban Indigenous communities are identified as a priority population in the Ontario Public Health Standards which are currently under review;
3. The Board of Health forward this report and the Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy to the Ontario Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care; Education;

Aboriginal Affairs; Training, Colleges and Universities; Municipal Affairs and Housing; Children and Youth Services; Attorney General; and Community and Social Services;

4. The Board of Health forward this report and the Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy to the Canadian Public Health Association, Ontario Public Health Association, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, Public Health Ontario, and the City's Aboriginal Affairs Committee;
5. The Board of Health direct the Medical Officer of Health to report back on an implementation plan for elements of TIHS which are within the Board of Health mandate by the end of 2016.

Financial Impact

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

DECISION HISTORY

On December 9, 2013, Anishnawbe Health Toronto (AHT) presented research to the Board of Health on premature death among Toronto's Indigenous community. This presentation reinforced the need for TPH to continue partnering with AHT and the TC LHIN to establish a comprehensive, community-led and integrated Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy (TIHS) to improve health outcomes for Toronto's Indigenous community. <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-64614.pdf>

On November 30, 2015, the report: *Developing the Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy* was presented to the Board of Health. This report outlined the establishment of the TIHAC and the community-led process for developing the TIHS. <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-85829.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto has the largest and most diverse urban Indigenous population in Ontario (Enviroics Institute, 2010). While local data is limited, national and First Nations databases reveal that Indigenous people fall far below non-Indigenous populations on many health indicators (Gionet & Roshanasfshar, 2013; Olding et al., 2014).

Indigenous people living in Toronto face a disproportionate burden of social challenges across the known determinants of health as well as barriers in accessing health services. Indigenous people experience higher rates of poverty, unemployment, homelessness, involvement with child welfare, food insecurity and challenges within the education system – all contributing to poor health outcomes (McCaskill et al., 2011; NCCAB, 2013; Olding et al., 2014; Steward et al., 2013).

Reducing Indigenous health inequities falls within the mandates of both the TC LHIN and TPH. The TIHS provides both organizations with recommendations to address health inequities and the systems influencing urban Indigenous health.

COMMENTS

The TIHAC was established to recognize that the TIHS must be led by community members themselves: 'Indigenous health in Indigenous hands'. This respects the principle of self-determination and echoes recommendations in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (2015) and the City of Toronto's *Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Communities* (2010).

Since March 2015, TIHAC has met regularly to develop the TIHS using an Indigenous Health Planning model.

Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy Highlights

The TIHS was presented at a community launch and feast on March 23, 2016 at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto.

The TIHS was born from the careful review of:

- findings from engagement sessions with diverse segments of the Indigenous community;
- findings from community stakeholder interviews;
- community health and socio demographic data;
- local Indigenous programs and services;
- urban Indigenous health strategies in similar Canadian jurisdictions;
- guidance from the TIHAC Elders' Council and Youth Council;

The TIHAC also received advice from Dr. Bernice Downey (Indigenous health governance specialist) to ensure the TIHS was situated within the context of national and international Indigenous rights (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

Overarching Themes

Three overarching themes are woven throughout the TIHS:

1. Reclamation of Well Being - TIHS reclaims Indigenous-centric governance and improved access to Indigenous healing knowledge and practice.
2. Spirit of Reconciliation: Making it Right - TIHS is based on calls to action for governments and the health system to redress the legacy of colonization and residential schools.
3. Reinforce a Population Health Approach - TIHS aims to reduce health inequities in Indigenous health in order to ensure wellbeing across the population.

Vision: We envision a thriving and healthy Indigenous community in Toronto through the respectful harmonizing of practices, policies and resource allocation.

Mission: To lead transformation in health programs and services toward well-being for Indigenous people in Toronto.

Operating Principles

1. Health plans are developed with Indigenous Peoples as full partners.
2. Wherever Indigenous Peoples go to access programs and services, they receive culturally appropriate, safe and proficient care, and all barriers to optimal care have been removed.
3. Care is planned to be responsive to community needs and is appropriate, efficient, effective and high quality at both systems and interpersonal levels.
4. Dedicated resources and funding for Indigenous Health programs and services will support a coordinated and collaborative system.
5. Leverage and build the capacity of Indigenous leadership and Indigenous communities to care for themselves.

Strategic Directions

The TIHS is comprised of three strategic directions which align with TPH's Strategic Plan, 2015-2019. Implementation will involve numerous partners: TPH, TC LHIN, health and non-health service providers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous agencies, including Anishnawbe Health Toronto, various ministries and Provincial Territorial Organizations. A complete list of the TIHS strategic directions and actions are outlined in Attachment 1 (A Reclamation of Well Being: Visioning a Thriving and Healthy Urban Indigenous Community – Toronto's First Indigenous Health Strategy (2016-2021)).

Next Steps

TPH is committed to implementing elements of Toronto's first Indigenous Health Strategy which are within the Board of Health mandate. TPH will take the following steps toward implementation of the TIHS:

1. Indigenous Cultural Competency Training for Toronto Public Health (TPH) staff and managers to continue laying a foundation for organizational readiness;
2. Develop a TPH Implementation Plan to integrate, support and evaluate TIHS public health priorities;
3. Report back to the Board of Health on the Implementation Plan by the end of 2016.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: A Reclamation of Well Being: Visioning a Thriving and Healthy Urban Indigenous Community – Toronto's First Indigenous Health Strategy (2016-2021)

REFERENCES

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