



REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Toronto Public Health's Implementation of the Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy

Date: December 30, 2016

To: Board of Health

From: Acting Medical Officer of Health

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto's first Indigenous Health Strategy 2016 – 2021, entitled *A Reclamation of Well Being: Visioning a Thriving and Healthy Urban Indigenous Community* was released by the Toronto Indigenous Health Advisory Circle (TIHAC) in May, 2016.

The Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy (TIHS) outlines 24 key actions to realize its vision of “a thriving and healthy Indigenous community in Toronto through the respectful harmonizing of practices, policies and resource allocation.” The TIHAC has requested that Toronto Public Health (TPH) lead the implementation of four actions:

1. Advocate for affordable, healthy food for Indigenous people in Toronto using an Indigenous lens;
2. Support programs that address violence in Toronto's Indigenous community;
3. Expand culturally secure parenting support programs; and
4. Support new and existing public health promotion programs focusing on physical activity, healthy eating, mental health promotion, healthy parenting, youth resilience and chronic disease prevention to be culturally appropriate.

This report provides an update on the implementation of these four actions of the TIHS, as well as the role TPH will play in support of the TIHS vision, mission, operating principles and remaining actions identified in the strategy.

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 Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (TC LHIN) to establish a comprehensive, community-led and integrated 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>

On May 30, 2016, Toronto's first Indigenous Health Strategy (TIHS) 2016 – 2021, entitled *A Reclamation of Well Being: Visioning a Thriving and Healthy Urban Indigenous Community*, and accompanying staff report and recommendations were endorsed by the Board of Health. The report highlighted the major themes, vision, mission and operating principles of the TIHS. The Board directed the Medical Officer of Health to report back by the end of 2016 on the implementation plan for elements of the TIHS which are within the Board of Health's mandate.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-92996.pdf>

COMMENTS

Toronto Public Health, TC LHIN and AHT partnered to develop a community-led TIHAC. The TIHAC created the TIHS to guide TPH and the TC LHIN, which represents the broader health system, in improving health outcomes in Toronto's Indigenous community.

TIHAC was established to recognize that the Indigenous health 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).

The Advisory Circle is comprised of eight Advisors, including representatives from both the TIHAC Youth Council and Elders' Council. The Advisors have been meeting regularly since the ceremonial launch of the circle in January, 2015.

The mandate of TIHAC is twofold:

1. To provide oversight, guidance and advice to the TC LHIN and TPH in the identification, planning, implementation, funding, research and evaluation of

culturally secure health programs and services for the diverse Indigenous community in Toronto; and

2. To influence public policy that impacts Indigenous health outcomes.

As part of the development of the TIHS, TIHAC reviewed the findings from community engagement sessions conducted by the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto with diverse segments of the Indigenous community (men, women, youth, seniors and people who are 2 spirit, transgender and homeless). In addition, the Advisors considered various knowledge products (Indigenous health and socio-demographic data, a scan of programs and services, funding streams, the experience of similar jurisdictions) synthesized by Well Living House, an action research centre focused on Indigenous health and well-being.

The TIHS was presented at a community launch and feast on March 23, 2016 at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. The TIHS is comprised of a vision, mission, operating principles, three strategic directions and 24 strategic actions (see Attachment 1)

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.

Strategic Directions

1. Reduce health inequities for Indigenous peoples
2. Influence the social determinants of Indigenous health
3. Harmonize Indigenous and mainstream health programs and services

Operating Principles

The key to TPH's success in implementing the TIHS will be in following the operating principles set out by TIHAC:

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; and
5. Leverage and build the capacity of Indigenous leadership and Indigenous communities to care for themselves.

In addition, TPH will implement the TIHS via:

1. **Building capacity:** Ensure TPH staff and management are trained in Indigenous cultural competency and have the supports necessary to work in a culturally safe

manner. Currently, staff and management have the opportunity to participate in both online and in-person training sessions offered by San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC). Knowledge exchange and network building is also available to staff through the TPH Aboriginal Health Community of Practice and consultation with TPH Health Equity Specialists.

2. **Leveraging partnerships:** Continue to work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners and agencies. Within the City of Toronto, these partners are: Children's Services; Shelter, Support and Housing; and Social Development, Finance and Administration. Toronto Public Health will continue to work with numerous Indigenous agencies, TIHAC, the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) and the Aboriginal Affairs Committee of City Council.
3. **Influencing decision makers:** Continue to support the TIHAC in engaging various levels of government and other stakeholders to implement the TIHS. To-date, TPH, TIHAC and TC LHIN have actively promoted the TIHS with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. Toronto Public Health participated in drafting a proposal for funding submitted by the TC LHIN to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) to support the TIHAC and implementation of the TIHS. No response to the funding proposal has been received from the MOHLTC as of the date of this report.
4. **Assuring Quality Based on Indigenous Methods and Measures:** Continue to work with TIHAC and other partners to develop evaluation plans for each TPH-lead action using Indigenous methods and measures of success.

Toronto Public Health's Role in TIHS Implementation

Since the launch of the TIHS in spring 2016, the TIHAC Advisors have reviewed the 24 actions and assigned a lead for each. Toronto Public Health has been asked to lead the implementation of four actions:

1. Advocate for affordable, healthy food for Indigenous people in Toronto using an Indigenous lens (including through the Toronto Food Strategy);
2. Support programs that address violence in Toronto's Indigenous community;
3. Expand culturally secure parenting support programs; and
4. Support new and existing public health promotion programs focusing on physical activity, healthy eating, mental health promotion, healthy parenting, youth resilience and chronic disease prevention to be culturally appropriate.

Please see Attachment 2 for an outline of leads and timelines for each of the 24 TIHS actions. The TC LHIN is responsible for implementing seven actions and the TIHAC will lead the implementation of 11. The remaining two actions will be led by other organizations as determined by TIHAC.

TPH Lead Action #1: Advocate for Affordable, Healthy Food for Indigenous People in Toronto Using an Indigenous Lens (Including through the Toronto Food Strategy)

Access to affordable, healthy food for Indigenous people has been identified by the TIHAC as a key social determinant of health to be addressed by TPH. Toronto Public Health will leverage its work through the Toronto Food Strategy partnerships with food justice organizations such as Food Share, and networks within the City of Toronto (e.g., Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation) to fulfill the following TIHS-identified deliverables specifically for the Indigenous community:

1. Support the creation of community garden initiatives
2. Research and report on policies for green spaces for food sustainability
3. Develop and implement strategies to increase access to affordable healthy food; and
4. Advocate for free access to prenatal vitamins.

TPH Lead Action #2: Support Programs Addressing Violence in Toronto's Indigenous Community

TIHAC has outlined the following deliverables for TPH to accomplish under this action:

1. Advocacy work is underway and demonstrable
2. Support given to agencies that have a mandate on violence against Indigenous women and families
3. Supported the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Report

Toronto Public Health will align its work on violence with provincial and federal efforts in the area of reconciliation and Indigenous anti-violence efforts. This process will also be informed by the federal inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW).

Toronto Public Health has also begun the process of engaging with the TIHAC to establish an overall process to address the issue of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The following actions have been incorporated into the TPH IPV Action Plan:

1. Establish a process for working in partnership with Indigenous communities to address IPV which honours the principle of self-determination; and
2. Work with TIHAC to identify relevant stakeholders to establish a process, timeline, and funding sources to develop best practice guidelines that address the issue of IPV with Indigenous peoples in non-Indigenous practice settings. These guidelines will use an anti-oppression theoretical framework, applying the principles of self-determination and incorporating Indigenous world views and measures of success.

At the request of the TIHAC, TPH is collaborating with TC LHIN, TIHAC and the Ministry of the Attorney General to identify the resources required to support families and impacted individuals before, during and after the MMIW Inquiry. The Inquiry is expected to occur in 2017. Ensuring supports are in place for Toronto is a priority for the TIHAC.

TPH Lead Action #3: Expand Culturally-Secure Parenting Support Programs

The TIHAC has identified TPH as the lead organization to increase the number and size of culturally secure parenting programs for the Indigenous community. TPH is committed to using the TIHS Operating Principles to guide its work in developing programs and services and building on the successes and learnings of programs focused on the Indigenous community such as the Aboriginal Peer Nutrition Program, Healthy Babies Healthy Children/Homeless At Risk Pregnancy Program (HBHC/HARP) and the Make The Connection program (enhanced for the Indigenous community). Toronto Public Health will continue to nurture its relationships, exchange knowledge and work in partnership with Native Child and Family Services Toronto and other Indigenous agencies providing parenting supports.

Toronto Public Health is increasing the capacity of all staff planning and delivering parenting programs to do so in a more culturally secure way. The following training and development sessions for staff and management have contributed to a deeper level of competence:

- Indigenous Cultural Competence training (Provided through the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres from 2015 to 2018)
- One Dish, One Spoon: Decolonizing Our Practices – Toronto Child & Family Network Aboriginal Advisory Committee (Nov 2016)
- Nurturing the Seed: Engaging and Supporting Indigenous Communities and Families – Infant Mental Health Promotion (Dec 2016)
- Online Indigenous Cultural Safety Training (Provided through San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety from Dec 2016 – Mar 2017)
- Approaches for Engaging and Empowering Indigenous Women Through Pregnancy and Parenting – Best Start/Health Nexus (upcoming in Feb 2017)

The Toronto Child and Family Network (TCFN) report led by Toronto Children Services, *Raising the Village: Measuring the Well Being of Children and Families in Toronto*, outlines 10 child and family outcomes and indicators of well-being. Part II of this report focuses on specific Indigenous outcomes that were developed with members of the Indigenous community and are consistent with TIHS Operating Principles. These 5 Indigenous-specific outcomes will provide a framework for TPH's work in expanding culturally secure parenting programs:

Strong Families:	Indigenous families, including all generations, are able to cope with challenges, meet their goals, and foster their culture and identity.
Cultural Equity:	Indigenous children and families experience their cultural identity and way of being with dignity and respect.
Self Determination:	Indigenous communities are able to make decisions that improve the well-being of their children, families and communities as a whole.
Self-Knowledge:	Indigenous children and families have knowledge of, take pride in, and have opportunities to express their identity.
Vibrant Communities:	Indigenous communities are diverse, vibrant, growing, and connected, and provide a source of strength for children and families.

Toronto Public Health will also continue to work closely with Children’s Services and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee of the TCFN. There will be greater opportunity for TPH, Children’s Services and other service providers to collaborate, coordinate and integrate services to improve Indigenous child and family well being.

TPH Lead Action #4: Support New and Existing Public Health Promotion Programs Focusing on Physical Activity, Healthy Eating, Mental Health Promotion, Healthy Parenting, Youth Resilience and Chronic Disease Prevention to Be Culturally Appropriate

The TIHAC calls for TPH to support new and existing culturally appropriate health promotion programs to address Indigenous health inequities with the following deliverables:

1. Conduct a baseline study to determine what programs have been targeted to the Indigenous community; and
2. Improved access to health promotion programs with improved health outcomes;
 - Increased physical activity for participants
 - Increased knowledge of culturally appropriate health promotion messaging
 - Improved quality of programs
 - Improved input in self-reported health status
 - Investment in existing and new programs addressing chronic disease prevention, mental health promotion, healthy parenting and youth resilience for the Indigenous population.

National and First Nations databases indicate that Indigenous people fare worse than the non-Indigenous population on a myriad of health indicators (Gionet & Roshanasfshar, 2013; Olding et al., 2014). Currently, there are little local data on Indigenous health. TPH is a co-investigator on the Our Health Counts (OHC) Toronto Urban Indigenous Health Database research project. This database will provide rich information about the health status and social determinants of health of diverse

Indigenous people in Toronto. The OHC Toronto data will be released to the public in early 2017.

The Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Program (CDIP) directorate is committed to working with Indigenous partners to provide high quality and culturally appropriate programs and services. CDIP will continue to support Indigenous Cultural Competency Training for staff which will contribute to the development of appropriate health promotion programs for chronic disease prevention.

CDIP has successfully partnered with Indigenous agencies to promote the *Our Sacred Gift* smoking cessation program which combines traditional teachings around tobacco with Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). Diabetes Peer Leadership and youth health promotion activities at the Native Youth Resource Centre and the *Get Your Fit'Nish On* project at Native Child and Family Services are other examples of chronic disease prevention work currently underway.

TPH will review the following health promotion programs to ensure they meet the needs of Toronto's diverse Indigenous population.

- Student Nutrition Program
- Community gardens
- Diabetes Peer Leadership
- Smoking cessation
- Youth resiliency/health promotion
- Raising Sexually Healthy Children
- Mental health promotion (including suicide prevention)
- Physical activity promotion (particularly work with Parks, Forestry and Recreation)
- Health promotion work in partnership with Toronto Public Library
- Other relevant health promotion programs and services

Toronto Public Health's Role in Implementing the Remaining TIHS Actions

Toronto Public Health continues to play a supportive role in ensuring that all TIHS actions are implemented. Under the TIHS Strategic Direction 1: Reduce Health Inequities for Indigenous Peoples, there are three actions that TPH will directly support:

1. Indigenous cultural proficiency continuum and learning opportunities
 - Since 2015, TPH staff, managers, directors and Board of Health members have participated in Indigenous Cultural Competency Training offered by the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. Training is key to laying the foundation for the implementation of TIHS at TPH.
2. Indigenous System Navigator
 - TPH will assign a system navigator to assist Indigenous people in accessing TPH programs and services. The Navigator will also provide TPH with insight into how to make TPH more accessible and culturally secure.
3. Welcoming, accessible and inclusive spaces

- TPH will work with the TIHAC and other Indigenous community partners to ensure that our program and service spaces (such as The Works; and Sexual Health Clinics) are welcoming, accessible and inclusive for Indigenous communities in Toronto

Toronto Public Health will also actively contribute to TIHS Strategic Direction 2: Influence the Social Determinants of Indigenous Health through its links with various systems and City divisions, particularly in the areas of education and housing. It should also be noted that the TIHS has inspired a number of shifts within TPH including the inclusion of TIHAC representation on the Toronto Drug Strategy Implementation Panel and the exploration of a Toronto Urban Health Fund (TUHF) Indigenous funding stream.

Next Steps

Toronto Public Health is committed to developing workplans and strengthening partnerships to implement the TIHS. 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, city divisions and Provincial Territorial Organizations to support the TIHS. The Medical Officer of Health will report back to the Board of Health on the progress of TPH implementation of TIHS in the spring of 2018.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: A Reclamation of Well Being: Visioning a Thriving and Healthy Urban Indigenous Community – Toronto's First Indigenous Health Strategy (2016-2021)
Attachment 2: Overview of TIHS Action Plan