



First Nations, Inuit, Métis & Urban Indigenous Cancer Strategy 2019 – 2023



Ontario Health
Cancer Care Ontario

Since 2004, multi-year provincial Indigenous cancer strategies have addressed and led to improvements in cancer care for Indigenous people in Ontario. The First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous Cancer Strategy 2019 – 2023 continues the work set out in the first three strategies.

Our vision

- Improve the performance of the cancer system for Indigenous people in Ontario in a way that honours Indigenous concepts of well-being
- Improve the well-being of Indigenous people in Ontario and reduce new cancers in these communities
- Empower supportive and healthy environments that build on the strengths of Indigenous individuals, families, communities and organizations

A unique burden

Cancer is not an equal opportunity disease. Some populations are at greater risk for developing cancer and suffer poorer outcomes than others. Indigenous people are among those populations who bear a disproportionately high cancer burden.

Our continuing journey

Our continuing journey - The First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous Cancer Strategy 2019 – 2023 provides a road map for the way Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario), Indigenous communities and individuals, and health system partners will work together to improve health equity and reduce the unique burden of cancer and other chronic diseases on Indigenous people.

Strategic Priority 1

Building Productive Relationships

Build and promote relationships with Indigenous partners based on trust and mutual respect

OBJECTIVES—BY 2023

- Build, grow, strengthen and sustain relationships
- Support Indigenous health priorities throughout health system transition
- Promote respect for and understanding of Indigenous knowledge and traditional practice

“The Anishinabek Nation has enjoyed a long-standing and mutually beneficial relationship with Cancer Care Ontario, which is reflected in our Relationship Protocol. Because of this solid working relationship, much has been accomplished in a relatively short time. While much progress has been made, both parties acknowledge there is still much to do.”

Tony Jocko, Federal Health Policy Analyst, Anishinabek Nation

Strategic Priority 2

Measurement, Monitoring and Evaluation

Compile and develop information to improve the quality of the cancer experience for patients, families and healthcare providers

OBJECTIVES—BY 2023

- Identify, access and analyze health data
- Address relevant health priorities using data
- Support communities in using health data for policy and program development and understanding the related implications
- Explore opportunities to partner with organizations with shared health data goals

“Our community has been working with the ICCU for over a decade. The team has been helpful in guiding and supporting our projects. They respect the knowledge and experience that we have in our community and complement it with their own.”

Sara Plain, Health Director, Aamjiwnaang First Nation

Strategic Priority 3

Prevention

Reduce rates of cancer and other chronic diseases in Indigenous people

OBJECTIVES—BY 2023

- Reduce and prevent cancer and other chronic diseases
- Develop and use evidence to reduce the burden of cancer and other chronic diseases
- Support prevention policies and develop programs to deal with emerging issues and trends

“The collaboration between the Canadian Cancer Society and CCO’s Indigenous Cancer Care Unit has led to a partnership where chronic disease prevention initiatives are strengthened from the sharing of knowledge, experience and unique perspectives each organization brings to the table.”

John Atkinson, Director, Cancer Prevention and Tobacco Control, Canadian Cancer Society

Strategic Priority 4

Screening

Increase participation in cancer screening among Indigenous people across the province

OBJECTIVES—BY 2023

- Improve access and participation in screening
- Improve coordination and integration of screening services
- Support specific initiatives to improve organized screening programs

“Having a dedicated unit for Indigenous cancer priorities is a proactive way to work collaboratively and head in the direction towards an integrated healthcare system that addresses Indigenous people healthcare needs comprehensively and provides the right tools to support cancer screening.”

Janet Gordon, Chief Operating Officer,
Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority

Strategic Priority 5

Palliative and End-of-Life Care

Help take care of the palliative and end-of-life needs of Indigenous people with cancer

OBJECTIVES—BY 2023

- Support timely and culturally safe palliative and end-of-life care
- Improve capacity of system to provide high-quality palliative and end-of-life care
- Support strategies to improve and enhance patient and family experience

“An Indigenous Navigator played an important role in my mother’s care. Traditional practices such as singing, drumming, praying and smudging provided comfort and powerful healing to both my mother and me.”

Tiffany W. belongs to the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations band and cared for her mother, Meta B. when she was being treated for stage 4 lung cancer.

Strategic Priority 6

Education

Increase the knowledge and awareness among Indigenous people about cancer and other chronic diseases, and increase cultural safety among healthcare providers

OBJECTIVES—BY 2023

- Measure and evaluate educational resources
- Support and increase culturally safe education and programming
- Support education and training for providers and Indigenous people
- Collaborate with partners to engage in knowledge transfer and exchange

“Historically, medical and nursing schools have not provided adequate education about the history, culture and health of Indigenous people. With the introduction of the Indigenous Relationship and Cultural Safety courses, we are starting to see a shift in the curriculum and recognition that more needs to be done to address these gaps in learning.”

Dr. Bernice Downey, McMaster University

Strategic Priority 7

Equitable Access

Reduce barriers in the health system and service delivery

OBJECTIVES—BY 2023

- Improve navigation and access
- Enhance quality and improve experience of services
- Increase the provision of culturally safe care

“After receiving a late stage cancer diagnosis, I was referred to a different hospital for further treatment as I live in a remote community. I was in a lot of pain and had symptoms of dehydration, however I was discharged and sent home in a state of distress without my concerns being addressed.”

Anonymous Community Member



To make real progress in addressing Indigenous cancer care needs, Indigenous people in Ontario must have a voice in shaping the work that addresses their unique issues and honours Indigenous concepts of well-being. CCO has demonstrated a commitment to partnering with Indigenous leadership, communities, patients, families, healthcare providers and administrators to create Indigenous solutions for Indigenous concerns.”

Alethea Kewayosh

Director, Indigenous Cancer Care Unit,
Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario)

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