



*Aboriginal  
Health  
Strategy  
Update*

**Fall 2015**

# First Nation and Métis Health

## Building a Representative Workforce

*"To build a workforce that is representative of the community we serve in order to provide quality, client-centred experiences to patients, clients, residents, and families within the Saskatoon Health Region."*

Representative Workforce (RW) - People Strategies Portfolio was established in 1995 with the signing of a Representative Workforce Partnership Agreement between Saskatoon Health Region and First Nations and Métis Relations (FNMR), Province of Saskatchewan.

Since then, the three unions representing the Region - Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN), and Health Sciences

Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS) - have each made similar commitments in each of their Collective Agreements supporting a representative workforce. RW identifies its top priorities as:

- Cultural competency
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Education and Learning

## Representative Workforce Strategy 2015-2018

The Renewal of the Representative Workforce Strategy is built on the work of the previous strategy and enhanced by a wrap of cultural competency provided by the Cultural Competency Framework.

The vision it be a diverse, culturally competent organization:

- with a workforce that is representative of the community we serve,
- providing quality, client centred experiences to patients, clients, residents and families within the Saskatoon Health Region's range.

## Cultural Competency Framework—Seven Domains with 45 preferred practices

### 7. Data/Accountability/Quality improvement:

Data is needed to assess and monitor competency status, integration into systems, and public accountability and quality improvement

### 6. Community engagement:

Community engagement and inclusion in organizational decision-making helps ensure culturally competent care

**5. Diversity and training** as an organizational commitment to cultural competency is a way to provide more effective services for a diverse population

### 4. Care Delivery and Support Mechanisms:

Delivery of care from first encounter to last, needs to support culturally competent care

### 1. Leadership environment:

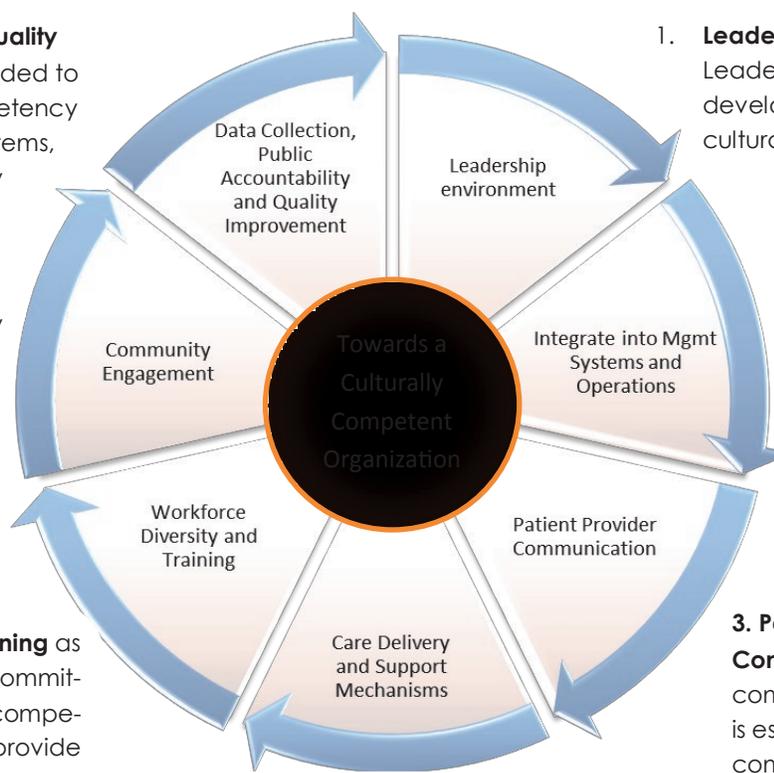
Leaders all share responsibility in the development and implementation of culturally competent activities

### 2. Integrate into Management Systems and Operations:

Supporting culturally competent care by integration into management and operations

### 3. Patient Provider Communication:

Clear communication at all levels is essential for culturally competent care

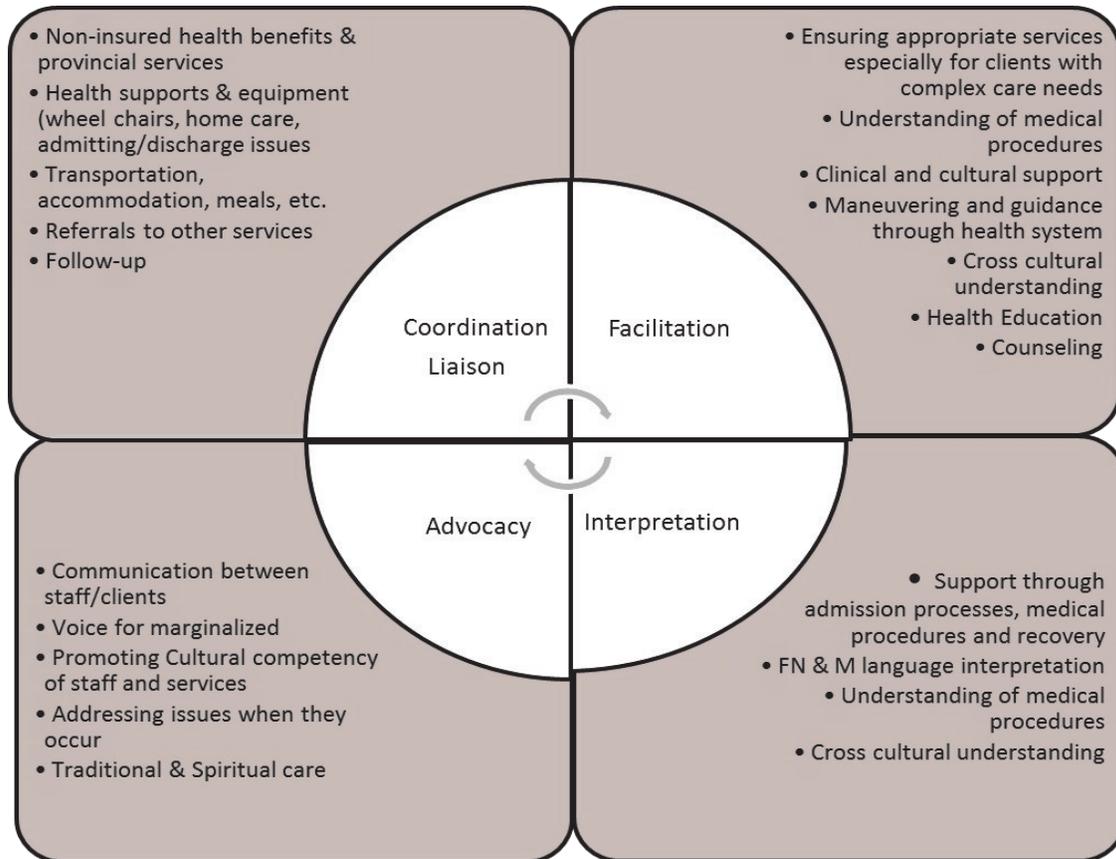


## The First Nations and Métis Health Service

Saskatoon Health Region's First Nations and Métis Health Service offers culturally appropriate, patient-centred care to Aboriginal patients and their families.

Established in 2012, the Health Service supports better care

by providing accessible and effective services to patients entering a Saskatoon Health Region care facility. It provides First Nation and Métis patients and their families with respectful provision of health care through an integrated, cultural, and holistic approach. Services include:



## Health Navigators

In response to the recommendations of the 2010 Aboriginal Health Strategy and the provincial *Patient First* report that identified the need for client- and family-centred care for First Nations and Métis patients, the Health Navigator Program was created. Offered at St. Paul's Hospital (SPH) and Royal University Hospital (RUH), the Health Navigator Program ensures that from the time of admission to discharge, patients are connected to individualized support that is responsive to their needs.

Health Navigators build individually-based relationships with their patients, utilizing a holistic approach to service delivery by addressing a patient's spiritual, emotional, physical, and social context. They play a crucial role as stakeholders by providing advocacy, interpretation, and facilitation services to address health disparities or reduce the kinds of barriers patients experience in the health system.

Navigators create opportunities for growth and increase understanding and compassion for clients being served.

Health Navigators work inter-professionally with other health-care providers and in the community. In addition, Navigators can provide information on

- Insured Health Benefits (NIHB)
- Translation services for Cree and Dene clients
- Spiritual and cultural care through an Elder and Spiritual Advisor.
- Standardized practice is currently being formalized to track First Nations and Metis patients through the system.

Enhancing awareness about the Health Navigators Program is key to increasing the number of staff making referrals to services and patients accessing those services.

Year-to-date statistics:

	Expansion to RUH			
	April 2014 to January 2015	February 2015	March 2015	April 2015
Health Navigators	2	2	4	3
Clients Seen	1,898	2,131	2,718	2,986
Referred to FHMHS	137	158	320	416
Walk-Ins	733	893	982	1,097

### Comparison Report for St. Paul's Hospital and Royal University Hospital Chart Audits

At the request of the Director of the First Nations and Métis Health Service, Saskatoon Health Region audits of First Nations patients admitted to St. Paul's Hospital and Royal University Hospital (RUH) were completed. The purpose of the present comparison report was to determine if First Nations patients had a significantly longer hospital stay than non-First Nations patients admitted to St. Paul's and the RUH over the same time period. Information obtained from this report will be used by the SHR for quality improvement purposes.

Results showed that:

- The average length of hospital stay for patients at St. Paul's to be 9.7 days and at RUH to be 11.2 days. No comparisons were made to the general population
- First Nations patients at both St. Paul's and RUH were significantly younger than non-First Nations patients.

- Non-First Nations patients at St. Paul's had significantly more Emergency Department (ED) admissions than First Nations patients, while there was no significant difference in ED admissions at RUH.

While First Nations patients are staying in the hospital longer than non-First Nations patients, the reasons for the longer stays need further investigation. Research in this area should use qualitative approaches to provide important contextual information regarding the experience of individuals. It is imperative that systems are put into place to gain a better understanding of the First Nations and Métis populations being served. Research is needed, in collaboration with First Nations and Métis patients and their families, to further understand this population's hospital stay in order to improve services and health outcomes.

### First Nations and Metis Health Service Cultural Advisor – Indian Residential School Support Services

The Health Region continues to support culturally competent care for First Nations and Metis peoples through the Cultural Advisor.

- Elder coordination and liaising – access to traditional ceremonies. In addition to this, the advisory works with and builds networks with community Elders. This work provides opportunity for community input towards health care services for First Nations and Metis patients and families. Providing supports and links to Elders and ceremonies within the city of Saskatoon. Assisting the regional Elders group in facilitating and coordinating traditional ceremonies and smudging
- Facilitation – providing assistance in prayers and smudging upon request

- Advocacy – connecting with patients and families to support the continuum of care.
- Assists Health Navigators with referrals to provide collaboration, communication and interpretation between health care staff, patients and families

The advisor alleviates issues for patients experiencing language barriers by offering Saulteaux language Interpretation and translation

Saskatoon Health Region offers support to residential school survivors through the Cultural Advisor. The advisor ensures that eligible former IRS students and their families:

- have access to emotional health and wellness support services

## Cultural Advisor cont.

- can safely address emotional health and wellness issues related to the disclosure of childhood abuse(s).

By providing emotional support to help patients and families manage their own healing and wellness, Saskatoon Health Region is utilizing a culturally approach to care. Meeting the needs of First Nation patients who have attended residential schools requires an in-depth understanding of the root causes of historical and inter-generational trauma. The Cultural Advisor acts as a support through attending residential school experience

## Client Representative

The Client Representative role has been evolving over the past year as attempts are made to foster a better understanding of process and concern management that is culturally appropriate and inviting to First Nations and Métis people. It was initially found that the approach and engagement looks different, often because of the one-on-one and family consensus approach for engagement that is desired.

Case work and concern management processes for Aboriginal patients often takes longer for a variety of reasons, including the need for many bedside visits, face-to-face introductions to help build trust, challenges with standard time frames due to travel issues, accommodation concerns, and the need for consensus for all family to be present. Ultimately, the accommodation of families is necessary, along with the organizing of large and complex meetings with care teams on short notice, and within a patient-centered context.

## Spiritual and Cultural Care

The Spiritual and Cultural Care Department of Saskatoon Health Region has a staff of seven persons, three of whom work as Spiritual Cultural Workers providing emotional and spiritual support to patients and their families. The staff regularly follow up with Aboriginal patients and offer a friendly face and reassurance, along with prayer and opportunities for smudging and/or other ceremonies when requested.

- Ron Thompson works weekdays at Royal University Hospital and provides service to Saskatoon City Hospital on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.
- Sharon Ahenakew works part-time at Royal University Hospital. Although Sharon provides support to a variety of patients, she focuses on the needs of those in pediatrics and maternity.
- Barb Badger, our newest team member, works weekdays at St. Paul's Hospital.

hearings, providing mediation and outreach and connecting patients with additional services and supports in their community.

The Cultural Advisor provides clinical and cultural supports for health care staff, patients, clients and families

In addition, the advisor provides testimonials about their personal residential school experience upon request. The Residential School support person provides clients and patients after care support and follow-up after discharge.

The Client Representative Office can provide education and information regarding cultural differences, form alliances/partnerships that benefit Aboriginal people, and facilitate having the voice of our Aboriginal people heard and respected. We provide transparent responses to the patient/family/resident and document concerns and corresponding outcomes statistically and anecdotally.

The role of Client Representative Aboriginal Liaison has provided the opportunity to form a very strong working relationship with First Nations and Metis Health Service, Ethics, and Spiritual Care. This integrated health care team has been involved with many quality improvement initiatives, including the administration of drugs, pain management, and race relations indifference.

With the support of the First Nations and Metis Health Service, Client Representatives are nurturing a sustainable integrated health care system that meets the often individualized needs of our Aboriginal patients.

In addition to direct patient support, our staff facilitate smudging ceremonies for patients and families across a variety of sites including:

- Royal University Hospital, 4<sup>th</sup> floor Multi-Faith Room: Tuesday at 11:00 a.m.
- Dubé Centre for Mental Health, Spiritual Room: Monday/Wednesday/Friday at 9:00 a.m.
- Saskatoon City Hospital, Multi-Faith Room: Tuesday/Thursday at 2:00 p.m.
- St. Paul's Hospital, First Nations Ceremonial Room: Thursday at 9:30 a.m.

Directions are found at each site related to requirements for accessing these facility services.

To reach any of our staff during daytime hours, please call our office at 655-1249.

## Report on Primary Health Activities

To learn more about the on-going partnerships in Primary Health within the Saskatoon Health Region community, visit: [https://www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/locations\\_services/Services/Primary-Health/Pages/AboriginalPHC.aspx](https://www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/locations_services/Services/Primary-Health/Pages/AboriginalPHC.aspx)

### Community Engagement and Aboriginal Relations in Saskatoon Health Region

One of the goals of the Primary Health department is to become the first contact of health care for individuals living in a community and to provide the best patient experience with access to the appropriate health care

team. First Nations and Métis communities are integral partners in building health care teams within communities served by Saskatoon Health Region.

### Community Developers

The Primary Health department employs a valuable and diverse set of Community Developers and Team Facilitators who work with the local First Nation and Métis communities to build relationships with respective community leadership.

Community Developers, Team Facilitators, and community partners work together collaboratively to identify health care services needed for community members.

### Chronic Kidney Disease Community Outreach Program

The Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Community Outreach Program is part of the Kidney Health portfolio of Saskatoon Health Region and is based out of St. Paul's Hospital. The program was developed as an initiative to address the increasing number of people with CKD in central and northern Saskatchewan.

The Program's Mission is to reach and communicate with populations at risk for CKD. Working with communities in northern and central Saskatchewan, the Program creates awareness and educates individuals about the risk factors for CKD and about healthier lifestyles for CKD prevention. This is done in partnership with various other healthcare organizations and not-for-profit groups.

The outreach team consists of a nurse clinician and a health educator who have knowledge and expertise in all aspects of CKD, from prevention to diagnosis, and management in various stages of CKD. The team provides support and education to healthcare providers, including family physicians. The team works with individuals in each

community to provide kidney disease screening for those at risk. As well, they provide in-services, education sessions, information displays, and resources to adult and youth in various environments (i.e. schools, addictions centres, health fairs, treaty days, etc.).

Now that the program is well established and known throughout the central and northern regions, it is time to work on the cultural competence aspects of serving First Nations and Métis populations. A huge portion of the work is in rural, northern, and remote communities, therefore trips to First Nations and Métis communities are very common. In fact, many screening clinics are held on reserve at health centres and clinics to provide regular visits as per their request.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada's most recent statistics note that one in every 10 Canadians has some type of chronic kidney disease. As of December 2014, the following percentages of Aboriginal individuals were in the Kidney Health program:

Service	% of individuals
Chronic Kidney Disease Clinic	16.6
Peritoneal Dialysis	22.9
Hemodialysis, In-Centre-St. Paul's Hospital	44.2
Hemodialysis, Cameco Community Renal health Centre	24.7
Hemodialysis, Satellite Unites (Tisdale, P.A, N. Battleford, Lloydminster)	57.7
Kidney Transplant (both living and deceased donor)	15.2

### **CKD Outreach Program cont.**

The Program is currently partnering with First Nations and Métis Health Service to provide a two-day event for First Nations and Métis clients with CKD. The purpose of bringing people together is to develop a strong partnership between Kidney Health patients and families, First Nations and Métis Health Service, and the Kidney Health Program

### **Diabetes Program: Aim 4 Health**

Aim 4 Health Program is a community outreach diabetes program providing education about diabetes prevention and care. The goal is to provide holistic, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate services with a specific focus on working with First Nations, Métis and Immigrant peoples. The interdisciplinary Aim 4 Health team includes a manager, physician, nurse, dietitian, health educator, social worker, and outreach worker. Individual counseling

### **LiveWell with Chronic Conditions**

LiveWell with Chronic Conditions provides support for people with health conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, chronic pain, etc. and their families to improve their health. The LiveWell with Chronic Conditions workshop helps participants take action and make choices that will improve their health, such as healthy eating, becoming physically active, reducing stress, and improving communication skills. The workshop helps to build their

to create action plans for better care. As listed in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Recommendations, the Program hopes to close gaps in health care for First Nations and Métis people at risk for developing or living with chronic kidney disease.

is offered for nutrition and diabetes education. Free drop-in programs include Fitness Food Fun offered at White Buffalo Youth Lodge and Food Experience at the Saskatoon Food Bank. Please call 306-655-LIVE (306-655-5488) for more information on these programs. Diabetes Program: Aim 4 Health is committed to strengthening partnerships within the community and Aboriginal organizations to meet the health needs of First Nation and Métis peoples.

confidence through weekly action planning and problem solving with the group. The workshop is led by trained Peer Leaders who are from the community. The Aboriginal Provincial Coordinator supports the delivery, promotion and expansion of the program throughout Saskatchewan. Please call 306-655-LIVE (306-655-5488) for more information.

