



Indigenous Health Services and Reconciliation at Niagara Health

July 13, 2026

Port Colborne Healthcare Advisory Committee

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Why are we here?

1. **Context setting**– Understanding the team and need for Indigenous supports in hospital
2. **Community context** – Understanding the needs of the Indigenous community to align health services
3. **Opportunities to transform care** – How Niagara Health is committed to reconciliation and Indigenous health
4. **Working as a partner in Niagara** – Overview of our current work with healthcare partners to address system gaps and provide wrap around services



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Transforming How we Work

Indigenous Health Services and Reconciliation Team

The IHS team works with
patients and staff

Provide services that align
with a wholistic approach to
care

Patient-centered and holistic
= relationship of
understanding + trust

Respecting diversity of
Indigenous community





Indigenous Health Services Team



Kate Bellon
Indigenous Relations Specialist



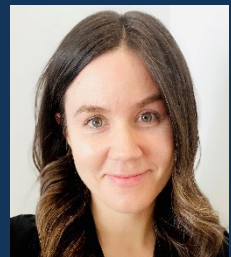
Charity Beland
Manager, Indigenous Health Services and Reconciliation



Isaiah Beardy
Indigenous Relations Specialist



Jessica Baskin
Indigenous Patient Relations



Emily Block
Indigenous Evacuee Support



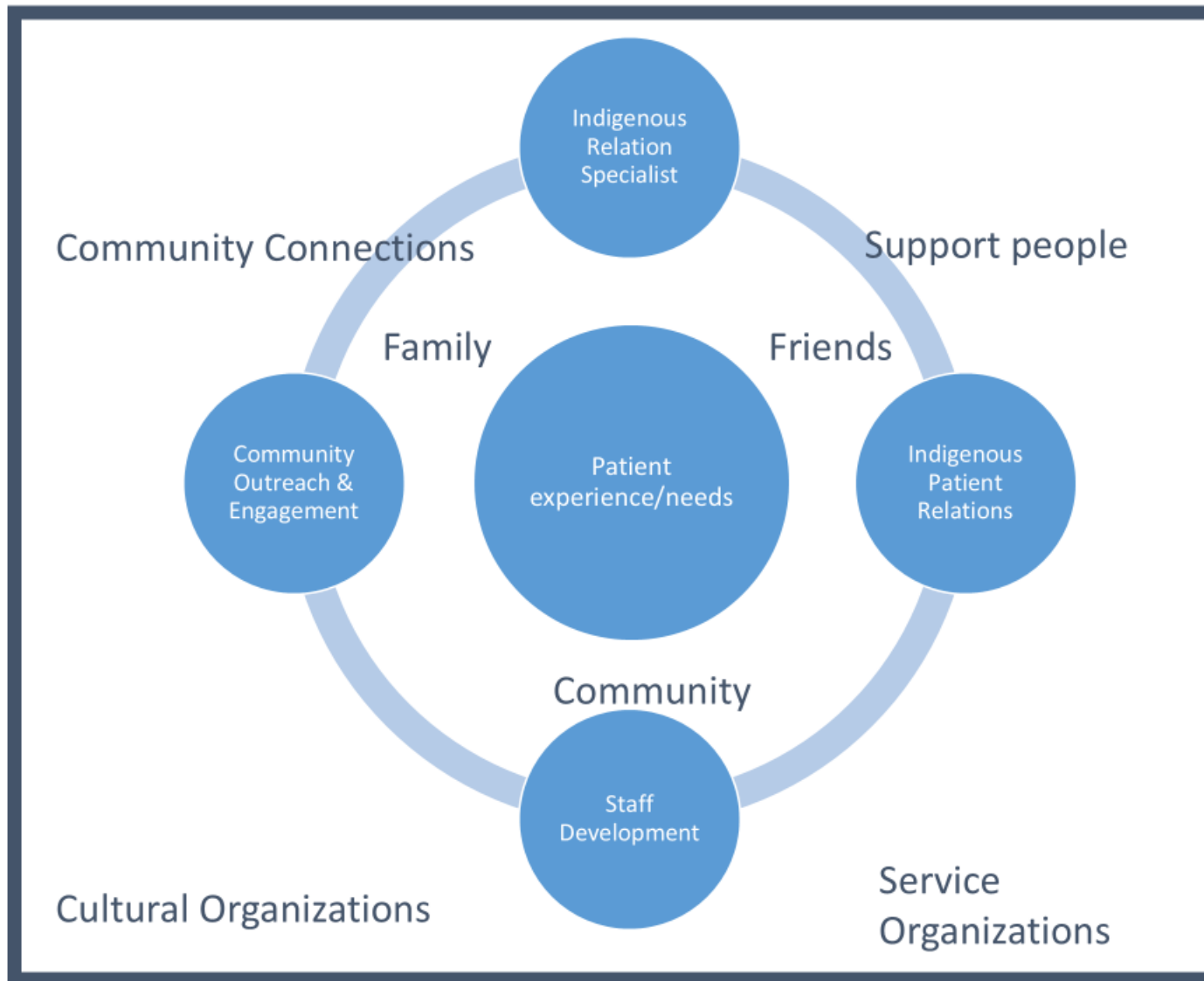
Shyann Jenkins
Indigenous Community Outreach and Engagement



James Donnett
Indigenous Evacuee Support



Krystal Brant
Indigenous Staff Development



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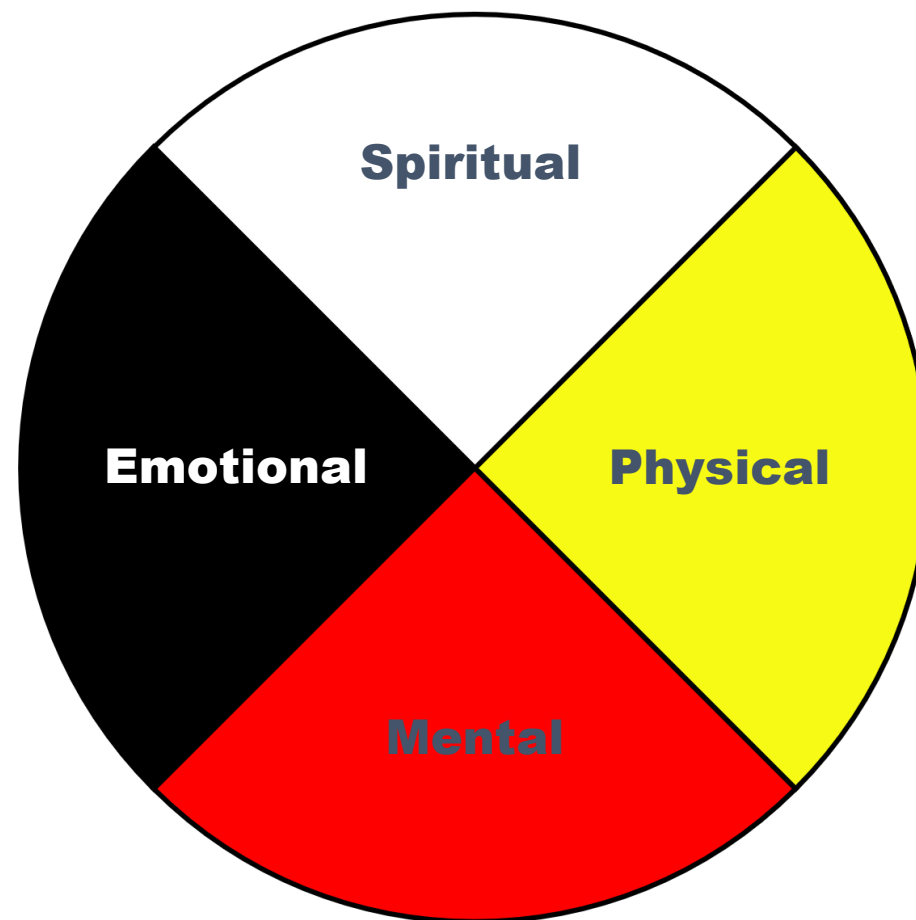




Wholistic Health



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Historical Background of No Informed Consent



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Residential Schools 1831 - 1997

- Forced attendance for Indigenous children age 7-15
- Church run and severely underfunded
- Constant hunger and most children suffered from malnutrition
- Indigenous bodies as "experimental materials"
 - Trials of tuberculosis treatments and vaccines
 - Canada Food Guide

Indian Hospitals 1936 - 1981

- Started as a promise for better health and hospital care
- The hospitals replaced traditional healing with biomedicine
- Indigenous patients underwent invasive chest surgery and experimental drug treatment
- It was a crime for Indigenous people to refuse to go to hospital, and to leave hospital before discharge.
 - The RCMP arrested patients and returned them to hospital or sent them to jail





Forced Sterilization

- Limit the reproduction of “unfit” persons
- Coerced sterilization undermines the ability of women to make decisions about their own lives
- used to reduce the number of those to whom the federal government has obligations to.

H1N1 / Covid

- When Indigenous communities requested support in outbreaks northern communities were shipped body bags instead of antivirals, hand sanitizer, and flu kits





Needs of the Indigenous community in Niagara

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- In 2021, the Indigenous population for Niagara (13,960 people) represents 3.0% of the total population. Within Ontario, the Indigenous population (406,585 people), represents 2.9% of the total population Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profiles (2021)
- Nearly three-fifths (59.8%) of First Nations adults, one third (33.2%) of First Nations youth, and more than one-quarter (28.5%) of First Nations children reported having one or more chronic health conditions (as diagnosed by a health care professional).
- Among adults reporting a chronic health condition, allergies (21.5%), arthritis (18.3%), high blood pressure (17.2%), diabetes (15.9%) and chronic back pain (12.4%) were the most commonly reported conditions.
- Data Source: First Nations Regional Health Survey-gathers information in more than 250 First Nations communities across Canada from First Nations children aged 0-11, youth aged 12-17 and adults aged 18 and older.



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Needs of the Indigenous community in Niagara

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- Niagara hosts Indigenous evacuees annually due to floods
 - In 2025 Niagara supported 5,300+ evacuees from 9 Indigenous communities
 - Currently Niagara is hosting over 1,000 Indigenous evacuees
- When Indigenous evacuees arrive, Niagara Health has limited information on health needs of the community



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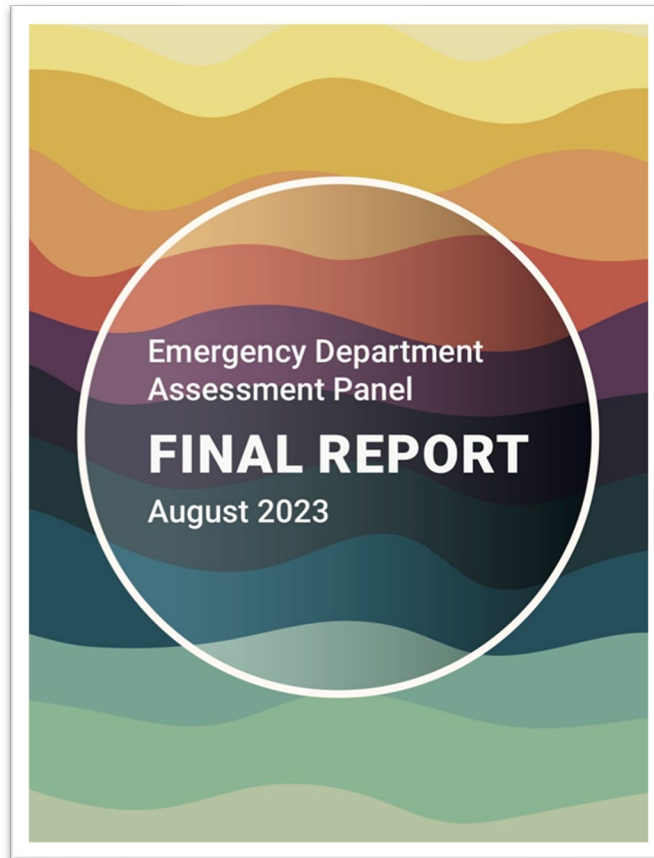


Niagara Health's Commitment to Reconciliation

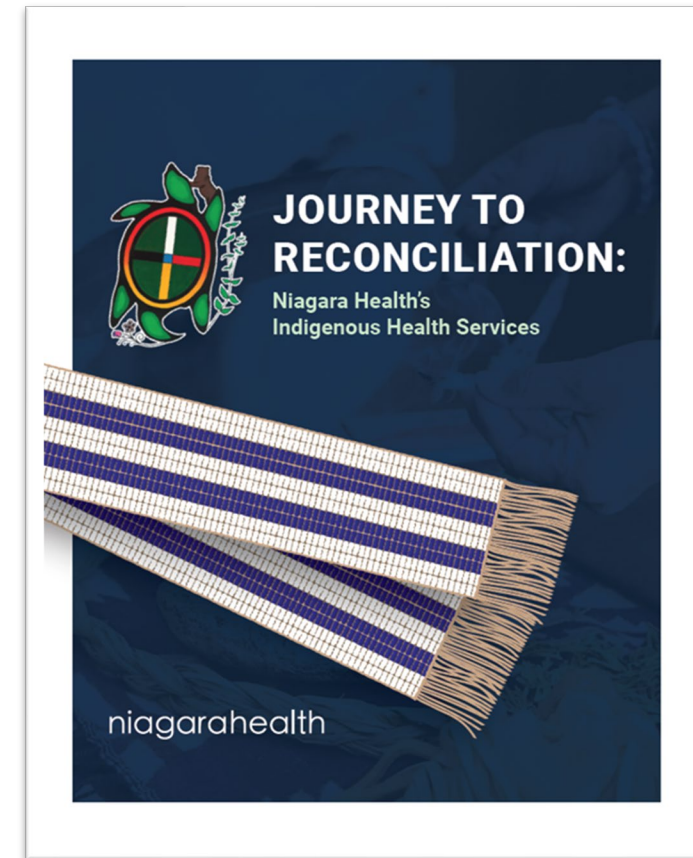


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ED Assessment: August 2023



Reconciliation Plan: May 2024



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Niagara Health's Commitment to Reconciliation

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- Smudging within Niagara Health sites
- Offering access to traditional medicines
- Indigenous Community Spaces



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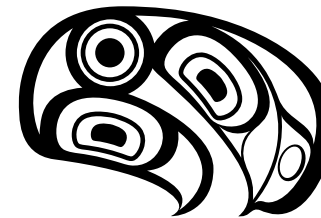
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Niagara Health's Commitment to Reconciliation

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- Mandatory 4 seasons of reconciliation training for all staff, volunteers, and physicians
- 100% of all leadership has completed San'yas
- Voluntary Indigenous self-identification to be launched September 2026



SAN'YAS
Indigenous-Specific
Anti-Racism Training



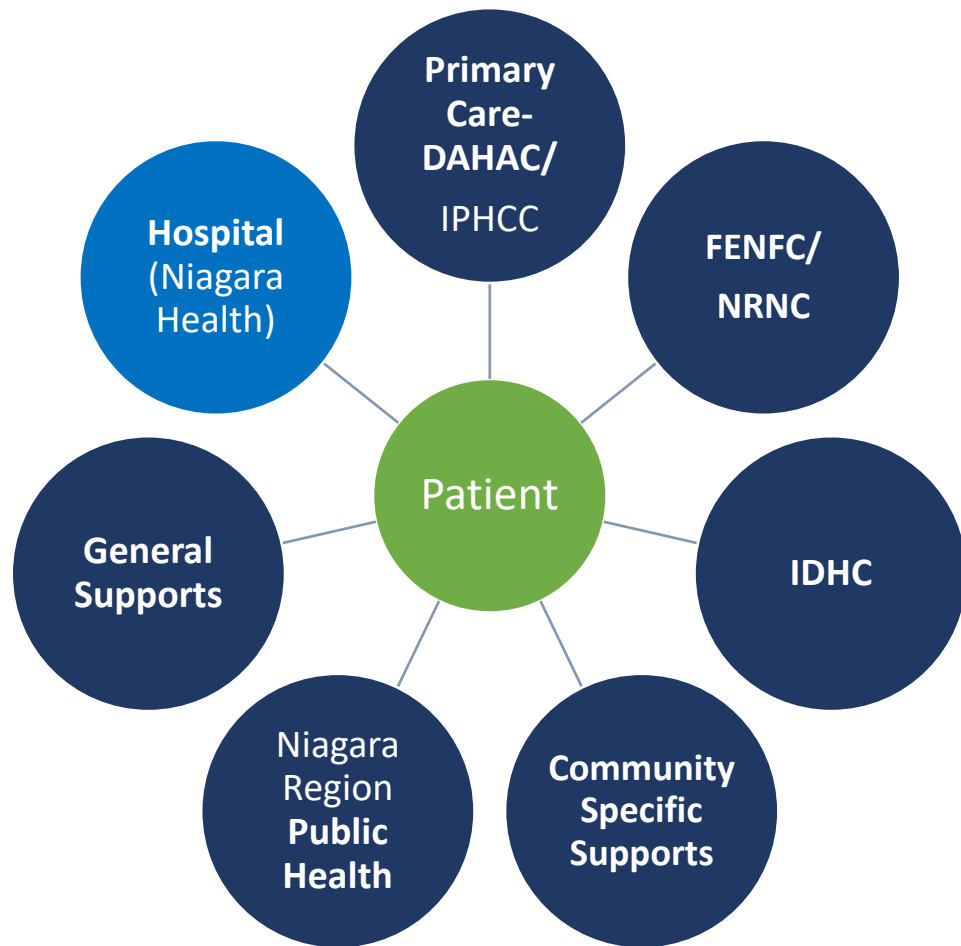
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Working Together for Improved Healthcare



Questions?

Nyá:wəh

Thank you!

Hiy Hiy

Miigwetch



Mîkwêc

Wado

Niá:wen

Marsi

Kinanaskomitin

Nakurmiik Mvto

Wela'lin