



OTTAWA ABORIGINAL COALITION

2323 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa, ON K1G 4J8

The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition acknowledges that we are on unceded Algonquin-Anishinaabe territory

Declaration

If elected, as Premier of Ontario, my government will:

- Make it a priority to end racism and discrimination against Indigenous peoples in Ontario's health care systems and institutions.
- Ensure that Indigenous people have the same access to health care and receive the same services as non-Indigenous people.
- Serve and support Indigenous peoples' right to health services, and to the right to receive kind and culturally competent care.
- Eliminate racism and discrimination in Ontario's health care "hot spots".
- Engage Indigenous health service partners and communities in designing and delivering service programs that meet the specific health needs of Indigenous peoples and that realize measurable, positive health outcomes.

In short, my government will recommit to the inspirational vision of the man whom Canadians identified as the most important figure in the history of this country, Tommy Douglas, the founder of Medicare. In his aspirational words, Mr. Douglas said:

We are all in this world together, and the only test of our character that matters is how we look after the least fortunate among us. How we look after each other, not how we look after ourselves. That's all that really matters.

Signature of Political Party Leader

With respect,

Allison Fisher
Co-Chair, OAC

Stephanie Mikki Adams
Co-Chair, OAC

The mission of Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health is to *make possible a world in which all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have achieved full and equitable access to the conditions of health including: pride in ancestry, cultural reclamation, peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable environment, resources, and social justice.*

Quality health care is a fundamental human right. Indigenous peoples in Ontario are *not* being respected or treated equitably and fairly by health care professionals and health institutions, and thus are bearing a high cost, both in terms of their physical and mental well-being.

Recognizing that systemic problems need to be countered by systemic solutions, Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health and the other members of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition call on Ontario Health to commit to addressing discrimination and anti-Indigenous racism at a systemic level, and to incorporate and operationalize anti-racism goals as an integral part of the ongoing cycle of service delivery and part of the ongoing process of service improvement for Indigenous peoples within Champlain region.

THEMES and RECOMMENDATIONS

1) OWNERSHIP (COURAGE)

Strategic Purpose:

Ontario Health will:

- Serve and support the Indigenous right to health;
- Offer kind and culturally competent care; and
- Provide equitable service provision and quality of care for Indigenous clients.

Action:

1. We call upon Ontario Health to support and contribute to a communications strategy that:
 - Denounces anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination harms of the past and present;
 - Declares intention to eliminate anti-Indigenous racism and improve access to quality and equitable health services; and
 - Acknowledges that improvement means change from status quo.
2. We call upon Ontario Health to identify priority action-planning to eliminate anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination to address “hot spots” for discriminatory and racist behaviours. These include:
 - Hospital emergency departments and maternity wards;
 - Community health clinics and family health teams; and
 - Paramedic services.
3. We call upon Ontario Health to establish a strong tone from the top. Institutional leadership and collective accountability must inspire all to embrace essential change.

2) COMMITMENT TO EQUITY & COLLABORATION (RESPECT)

Strategic Purpose:

Ontario Health:

- Reaffirming the contributions and commitment of local health institutions to the vision of eliminating anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination;
- Endorses the essential expertise of Indigenous health leaders, institutions, and professionals in the delivery of culturally competent and trauma-informed care and service; and
- Improving upon the delivery of equitable, responsible, and reciprocal health services for Indigenous peoples by building and maintaining meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health leaders and communities.

Action:

1. We call upon Ontario Health to engage regularly and systematically with local Indigenous health service partners and communities involved in the delivery of health services to identify, develop, and support champions of change within the system/sectors.
2. We call upon Ontario Health to act urgently to reduce harm and improve health care services for Indigenous peoples by jointly developing and implementing a comprehensive anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination strategy, including the “hot spot” areas identified in SYS project;
3. We call upon Ontario Health to define and communicate equitable health service delivery standards and expectations;
4. We call upon Ontario Health to engage Indigenous health service partners and communities in designing and delivering service programs that:
 - Acknowledge and affirm the value of cultural knowledge and competency;
 - Improve system-wide understanding of Indigenous histories and related service experiences; and
 - Empower *all* service providers to stand against racism and discrimination.
5. We call upon Ontario Health to institute a comprehensive review of existing policies and procedures in each institution, including comparative analysis of gaps, blind spots, and inconsistencies.

3) EXPECTATIONS (TRUTH)

Strategic Purpose:

Prepare for system-wide success in eliminating anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination by ensuring a clear understanding of the:

- Overarching goals for system change and improvement;
- Roles of individuals within the system towards those goals;

- Associated accountabilities, rewards, and consequences for individual performance; and
- Importance of client-centred care.

Action:

1. We call upon Ontario Health to direct institutional leadership to develop performance expectations and accountabilities that:

- Identify strategic priorities that focus on improving Indigenous health outcomes;
- Set specific organization-wide performance goals to eliminate anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination based on measurable results, with accountability requirements for leaders;
- Develop and assign individual performance goals that align with organizational goals, with accountability provisions for individuals/units; and
- Set evaluation targets and outcomes that are clear and measurable.

2. We call upon Ontario Health to direct organizational leadership to commit to meaningful service and behaviour monitoring that will:

- Co-design and implement procedures and practices for measuring quality of outcomes for Indigenous peoples, including but not limited to:
 - Timely access to health service and care, and
 - Equitable quality of service provided, based on:
 - Number of complaints by institutional location and sector; and
 - Nature of complaints, such as stereotyping, name-calling, demeaning behaviour, denial of medication or administering medications without consent, withholding of care or substandard, differential care.

3. We call upon Ontario Health to implement a system of complaints management, beginning with:

- Designing and establishing a 'safe' complaints mechanism for reporting incidents as experienced or as witnessed, including whistleblower protections;
- Identifying and assigning individual(s) specifically accountable for gathering, reporting, and interpreting all such outcomes, including new position(s) as necessary; and
- Considering the establishment of a race and equity ombudsperson.

4. We call upon Ontario Health to direct organizational leadership to commit to timely and transparent communications with Indigenous communities that:

- Incorporates quality of service-related feedback;
- Identifies and addresses problems as they arise; and
- Acknowledges progress towards improvements in service to Indigenous peoples.

5. We call upon Ontario Health to direct institutional leadership to commit to improved human resources systems that:

- Engage Indigenous partners in health services, and relevant colleges, universities, and governments, to develop strategies for attracting, recruiting, and retaining a more representative workforce;
- Sets specific targets for Indigenous diversity at all levels of personnel within the health care system, including senior management;
- Addresses systemic racism in lack of promotion opportunities for under-represented Indigenous personnel;
- Re-evaluates and communicates new mandatory requirement for anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination awareness and Indigenous cultural competency for all supervisory positions, and all job promotions within the system;
- Incorporates Indigenous diversity knowledge, anti-Indigenous racism, and cultural safety training as measurable assets in all candidate evaluation for new hires; and
- Establishes mentorship programs, placements and assignments to allow Indigenous and non-Indigenous personnel to learn from each other.

6. We call upon Ontario Health to:

- Ensure adequate financial prioritization and budget allocations to achieve the goal of eliminating anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination.

4) STANDARDS (LOVE)

Strategic Purpose:

Support and nurture system-wide success in eliminating anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination by ensuring all healthcare professionals have a clear understanding of the standards of knowledge, treatment, and human interaction required for competent, safe care.

Action:

1. We call upon Ontario Health to direct organizational leadership to:

- Develop and/or refine anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination policies;
- Review current practices such as “birth alerts” and the role hospital and community organizations play in the apprehension of Indigenous babies and children;
 - Seek guidance from Indigenous health leaders and community for new policies and procedures related to real or perceived child protection issues with consideration of Indigenous historical context and multiple recent reports such as TRC calls to action 1–5.
- Review practices related to pain management and how these practices impact Indigenous peoples; and
- Address pervasive assumptions that Indigenous peoples are alcoholics and substance users.

2. We call upon Ontario Health to direct organizational leadership to commit to competent, safe care by collaborating with Indigenous health service partners to:

- Create safe environments for service delivery;

- Design and provide equitable spaces for Indigenous spiritual comfort and solace; and
- Reflect Indigenous culture in decor and organization of space.

3. We call upon Ontario Health to direct organizational leadership to:

- Review and/or design standards for quality service expectations;
- Collaborate with Indigenous health service partners to identify additional standards needed to support and reflect an Indigenous anti-racism and discrimination strategy;
- Establish systems, roles and procedures for recording actual service delivery, and incorporating into performance evaluations, such as:
 - Wait time for Indigenous patients to register for service, and
 - Lapsed time between registration and treatment of Indigenous patients.
- Establish systems, roles, and procedures for reporting and documenting negative incidents or infractions, and incorporating into performance evaluations; and
- Collaborate with Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners to consider development of an accreditation standard for Indigenous-welcoming, anti-racist workplaces.

4. We call upon Ontario Health to co-create and fund mandatory organizational learning and anti-Indigenous racism training and to include anti-Indigenous racism training in orientation packages for all new employees. This will include:

- Regular communications and demonstration from leadership on the importance of Indigenous specific cultural competency and anti-racism learning;
- Schedule and assign training as mandatory professional development for all health personnel within the system; and
- Ensure that this training is included in the orientation of new employees.

5) ACCOUNTABILITY (HUMILITY)

Strategic Purpose:

Eliminating anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination is complex, does not promise immediate results, and requires continuous improvement, time, and vigilance.

Action:

1. We call upon Ontario Health to provide resources to:

- Train or hire advocates and Indigenous navigators in hospitals and other non-Indigenous health institutions to ensure equitable access to health resources, language services, and respectful, equitable care.

2. We call upon Ontario Health to:

- Train or hire personnel (e.g., ombudsperson) to report and analyze the effectiveness of new anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination measures on an annual basis.

3. We call upon Ontario Health to:

- Require organizational leaders and supervisors to receive and assess information related to anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination initiatives relevant to their sectors and assigned staff, with regular cycles for evaluation, ensuring awareness of:
 - Any and all new systems and sources of data that may be used as part of performance feedback;
 - Individual and organizational value of any new standards; and
 - Range of potential consequences for individual or unit violations of new standards.
- Require institutional leaders and supervisors to incorporate into their evaluation discussions with assigned employees any complaints and/or compliments related to anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination on an ongoing basis; and
- Require institutional leaders and supervisors to discuss and create opportunities for individual learning plans as needed, as follow-up to training.

6) OVERSIGHT (HONESTY)

Strategic Purpose:

Reinforce that transparency, communication, and external feedback from Indigenous communities and clients is highly valued in tackling systemic racism and anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination.

Action:

1. We call upon Ontario Health to engage with Indigenous health service partners, clients, and community members to seek regular feedback of health service equity - both perceived and experienced.
2. We call upon Ontario Health to collaborate annually with Indigenous health partners, clients, and community members to identify progress, gaps, continuing problems, or new challenges; and
3. We call upon Ontario Health to develop a robust, feedback-rich process to correct or eliminate identified problems.

7) CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT and RENEWAL (WISDOM)

Strategic Purpose:

Entrench the belief that eliminating anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination is not a short-term, one-time project, but an ongoing process that must be continually practised.

Action:

1. We call upon Ontario Health to annually restate the system-wide goal of improved health care access for Indigenous peoples, better experiences in health care institutions, and better health outcomes;
2. We call upon Ontario Health to identify patterns of undue harm as identified in annual performance and accountability cycle; and

3. We call upon Ontario Health to commit to prioritization and corrective action in the entire health system, including identified “hot spot” areas.

