

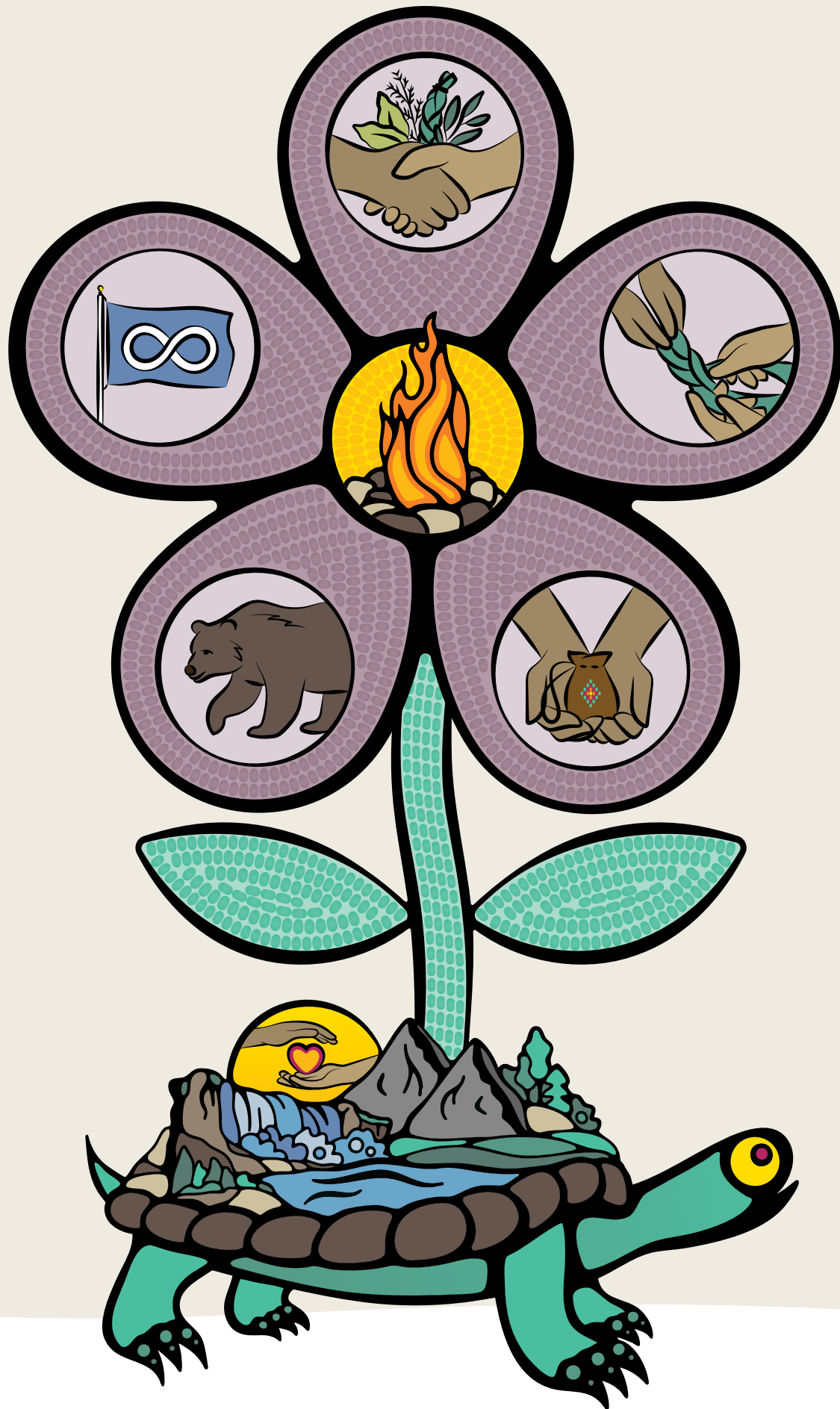
Visualizing the West Region Indigenous Health Strategy

A strategic map
to advance
Indigenous health

Indigenous Leaders Model
April 2025



Ontario Health
West

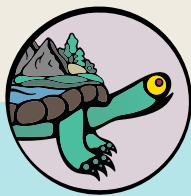


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Purpose of the West Region Indigenous Health Strategy

The Ontario Health West Indigenous Health Strategy is designed to weave together priorities raised by Indigenous communities across the West Region with current government priorities and to mobilize a whole organization response and action plan to drive implementation and improvement.



Turtle Island

Turtle Island is the name given by many Indigenous Nations to what is presently described by Western society as North America. The turtle itself also carries significant meaning and varies from Nation to Nation. The idea of the turtle representing land is found throughout many Indigenous creation stories. From the turtle's back, life began.



Community

We look to community for knowledge and guidance in advancing Indigenous health and wellbeing. Believed to be derived from the Iroquoian word "Onguiaahra" which means "the strait" or "thundering waters", Niagara Falls, a very special landmark in the West region, has served as a gathering place for Indigenous communities for thousands of years. A place of deep cultural and spiritual significance, it welcomed different Nations who would gather to discuss peace, trade, and resolve conflicts..



Wholistic Health

Balancing physical, spiritual, emotional and mental aspects of health across the life span and between government and Indigenous community-level needs.



Sacred Fire

Where we gather and are connected; the heart of the strategy, centred in tradition.

Strategic Petals

Taking Relational Approaches to Advancing Indigenous Health

To build meaningful and purposeful relationships required to support Indigenous health planning and investment



1. Relationship Building with Ontario Health West Communities

- Relationship building with Ontario Health
- Relationship building with Ontario Health Teams (OHTs)
- Relationship building with health service providers (HSPs)

2. Build partnerships to walk together in a good way

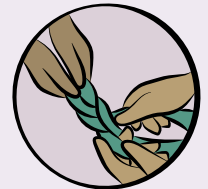
3. Honour teachings, protocol and ceremonies of all Nations

4. Create individualized assessment needs with community driven feedback (workplans, review landscape, and understand unique needs)

5. Plan and establish a community visit schedule that is meaningful to both community & the Indigenous Leaders Model (ILM)

Braiding Indigenous and Western Health Systems

Collaboration that ensures Western Health Service Providers and system partners have the knowledge, history, policies, and relationships required to support Indigenous-informed, distinctions-based, culturally safer healthcare, and employment experiences for Indigenous people



1. Knowledge Translation

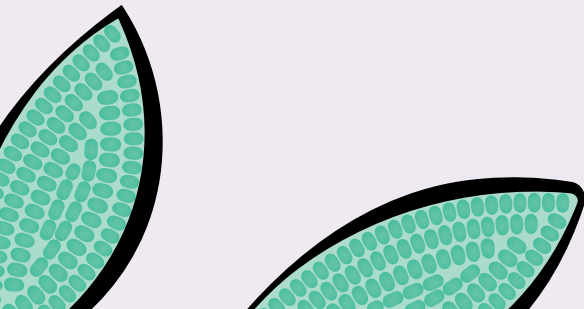
- Increased Indigenous Cultural Safety Training
- Recognition of traditional knowledge (incorporate traditional healing into practice i.e., smudging in hospitals, cedar water)
- Knowledge dissemination of SDoH & role it plays in Indigenous Health

2. Policy & Procedure

- Evolve Ontario Health procurement policies and other financial processes to support consideration of Indigenous cultural practices and norms
- Supporting the development of safe and accessible feedback and complaints processes

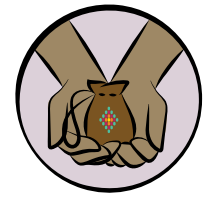
3. Systems Change

- Recognition of Indigenous histories through the adoption of cultural safety mechanisms for both clients, families, & staff
- Health Human Resources:
 - Increased recruitment, & retention strategies for skilled Indigenous workers
 - Support system wide Indigenous cultural safety through mandatory Indigenous reporting for Service Accountability Agreements
 - Policies/Procedures that support cultural safety & Implementation of inherent rights as Indigenous Peoples (access to traditional medicines & practice of it)



Investing in Indigenous Health in Indigenous Hands

Indigenous health service providers have the ability to provide wholistic, integrated & barrier free Indigenous-led care to those who require it



1. Develop an Indigenous health funding allocation model that includes traditional healing, administration, transportation, data support, and navigation

- Work with individual First Nations to understand gaps in care models and develop a costing analysis for each

2. Develop an Indigenous health investment and impact scorecard to track and report on investments year over year

3. Implement less intensive but more meaningful reporting mechanisms for those within Ontario Health control

4. Grow Indigenous health systems leaders through mentorship and internship opportunities

5. Increase access to evidence-based integrated Indigenous-led care models within indigenous communities to support timely and culturally safe access to:

- Primary care
- Indigenous navigators
- Community support services
- Palliative care services
- Mental health and addictions care
- Land-based healing
- Community paramedicine services
- Sustainable 2SLGBTQIA+ services
- Pediatric and youth-based Indigenous services
- Diagnostic imaging
- Emergency health evacuation responses
- Alternate Level of Care (ALC)
- Surgery

Improving Indigenous data collection, analysis, quality and governance

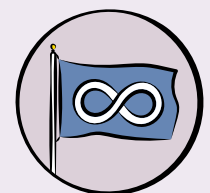
Ontario Health West has the capacity to ethically collect and share Indigenous health data following established Indigenous research, data collection and usage principles to support evidence-based decision making, including internal Indigenous Governance Matters processes



1. Support the coordinated collection and use of high quality and culturally safe Indigenous health data
2. Support increased use of data governance wise practices
3. Increase opportunities to fund platform and digital capacities within Indigenous health services
4. Increase adoption and use of digital tools within Indigenous communities

Advance Métis Health in the West Region

Building relationships and sharing information required to advance Métis-led health services in the West Region



1. Build equitable and productive relationships with Métis leaders and providers
2. Understand the scope and current capacity of Métis-specific health services in the West Region
3. Increase access to Métis-led care