

Funding Opportunity for Palliative Care in Indigenous Communities

Ontario is supporting First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and Urban Indigenous (FNIMUI) peoples to strengthen palliative care for their communities. By making funds available, the Ontario government is working towards the provision of timely, equitable access to high-quality palliative care for Indigenous communities. For example, better palliative care could be achieved through:

- Growth of tailored palliative care programs to serve FNIMUI communities that reflect Indigenous approaches and cultural knowledge.
- Enhancing the palliative care capacity of care providers in FNIMUI organizations and communities.
- Better integration and coordination between care providers and community organizations.

This funding has been made available in conjunction with the implementation of the [Palliative Care Health Services Delivery Framework in the Community \(The Delivery Framework\)](#) across the province. The Delivery Framework outlines a model of care to guide the continued growth of palliative care in Ontario. This model builds on existing capacity and supports local flexibility. The Delivery Framework was developed with input from representatives of FNIMUI communities and organizations, with recommendations specific to palliative care for Indigenous peoples. Ultimately, it will lead to sustainable, equitable and coordinated palliative care for Ontarians experiencing a serious illness and their family or caregivers.

The Ontario government recognizes that palliative care for Indigenous people must include culturally appropriate, trauma-informed, and locally based care. In order to be beneficial and sustainable, palliative care programs should be an extension of the Indigenous communities themselves, incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and culture. Recognizing that the history and priorities of each community are unique, a self-determined approach is required to advance local palliative care.

This is a call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) to demonstrate readiness and vision to strengthen palliative care for FNIMUI patients. To improve the quality and accessibility of care received by Indigenous people in Ontario, funding has been allocated by the Ministry of Health to support the growth of local Indigenous-led palliative care programs. In fiscal year 2024/25, the estimated total

funds available are \$3.3 million (with \$550,000 allocated per Ontario Health Region). In fiscal year 2025/26, the estimated total will grow to \$6 million (with \$1 million allocated per Ontario Health Region).

What is palliative care?

We use a definition that is aligned with the World Health Organization's definition of palliative care: "Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families who are facing problems associated with life-threatening illness. It prevents and relieves suffering through the early identification, correct assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, whether physical, psychosocial or spiritual"¹.

In *Preparing for the Journey: Caring for Indigenous People Who Are Seriously Ill*², parallels are drawn between the Indigenous Wellness Framework and the concept of a palliative approach to care.

"The palliative approach to care emphasizes the relationships between the body, mind, and spirit and the need for care to address these different areas of self in order to achieve wellness. The palliative approach to care honours the connections and relationships that people have with family members, community members, and care providers, and views the family as the unit of care. The palliative approach to care also focuses on wellness and healing through physical healing, spiritual healing, and the healing of families through grief work."

First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous communities may have definitions of palliative care that are customized to their traditions, their history, and the needs of their community.

¹ [Palliative care \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/palliative-care)

² Holly Prince. (2017). *Preparing for the Journey: Caring for Indigenous People Who Are Seriously Ill*, Version 1: Centre for Education and Research on Aging & Health, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, ON, retrieved from www.cerah.lakeheadu.ca

Application Requirements and Evaluation

A completed Expression of Interest (EOI) application must be submitted by FNIMUI communities or organizations to Ontario Health to be considered for this funding opportunity.

Ontario Health will assess submissions to determine groundwork and readiness (related to community capacity) as well as plans for immediate growth of a local palliative care program and/or services. Regional palliative care and Indigenous teams from the Ontario Health Regions will use common criteria to review and assess EOI submissions. Based on a standard evaluation framework, the Ontario Health Regions will make recommendations for funding approval.

Eligible organizations

Applications may come from:

- Indigenous-led organizations or service providers, including Aboriginal Health Centres, serving any FNIMUI communities or organizations in Ontario
- Indigenous health authorities
- First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Communities/Tribal Councils

Each applicant should:

- Provide culturally appropriate care for adults in the community. This care might involve clinical care, health promotion or navigation services (regardless of the funding source). The applicant does not currently need to be providing palliative care.
- Have established a foundation of readiness to advance the development and implementation of a local palliative care program.
- Embrace a self-determined approach for implementing the Delivery Framework in a way that is culturally appropriate, provides culturally safe care and considers whole family supports.

Eligible Expenses

This is one-time funding, over two years. Examples of what funds might be used for:

- Training for local care providers in palliative care (for example, a local social worker might benefit from additional training in serious illness conversations).
- Adapting a space to make it more suitable for palliative care (with equipment to meet medical needs, as well as providing a comfortable environment for families).
- Expanding palliative services (such as contracting an Elder to provide traditional medicine, conduct ceremonies or provide teaching).
- Advancing your palliative care program (such as temporarily hiring a program coordinator).

A high-level outline of proposed spending is required at the time of application. If selected, the Ontario Health Region will work with successful applicants to develop a more detailed budget.

Resources for Applicants

Please email your Ontario Health Regional contact to receive an EOI application by email, to get answers to your questions or to request assistance to prepare your application.

- In Ontario Health Central Region: sara.binns@ontariohealth.ca
- In Ontario Health East Region: PalliativeEOI_East@ontariohealth.ca
- In Ontario Health North East Region: OH-NE-Finance@ontariohealth.ca
- In Ontario Health North West Region: OH-NW-Submissions@ontariohealth.ca
- In Ontario Health West Region: brady.williams@ontariohealth.ca

Submit your application

Completed EOI application forms must be submitted by email to your Ontario Health Regional contact by 5 p.m. ET (Eastern Time) on Friday, May 3rd, 2024.

Need this information in an accessible format? 1-877-280-8538, TTY 1-800-855-0511, info@ontariohealth.ca.
Document disponible en français en contactant info@ontariohealth.ca