



**Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
Strategy and Implementation Plan**

2025-2030

Revised February 2026

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Implementation Plan

At Hanover & District Hospital, we are deeply committed to fostering an environment where equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are fundamental to everything we do. Our comprehensive EDI Strategy, developed through extensive consultations with staff and physicians between October 2024 and January 2025, reflects our unwavering dedication to embedding these principles across all aspects of our operations. Under the leadership of our President & CEO and Vice Presidents, and guided by our Health Equity Committee, we strive to create a healthcare environment that celebrates diversity, promotes equity, and ensures inclusion for all our patients, staff, and community members. This strategy represents not just a plan, but our collective promise to drive meaningful change through measurable actions, clear accountability, and continuous evaluation. As we move forward, every member of our hospital community plays a vital role in bringing this vision to life, ensuring that EDI becomes intrinsic to our organizational culture and healthcare delivery.

A More Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Hospital

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are critical concepts that hospitals must consider when delivering health care services.

Equity means that all people can participate or engage equally based on a fair distribution of opportunities and resources regardless of who they are and where they come from.

Diversity refers to the fact that people come from different backgrounds and experiences, including, but not limited to age ability, gender, identity, language, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, experiences related to use and more.

Inclusion refers to the extent to which people feel included, welcomed, valued and respected. An inclusive culture is one that embraces diversity in all of its forms.

The goal of this EDI Strategy is to enhance delivery of equitable and culturally safe health care services, regardless of the dimensions of diversity of the people served by the hospital. It will allow us to live up to our mission of providing exceptional care and address inequities that disproportionately affect equity-seeking populations.¹

The EDI Strategy and Implementation Plan for HDH will serve as the foundation for many hospital initiatives aimed at creating an environment where all people feel welcomed, safe and respected. The EDI Strategy complements initiatives including those relating to Indigenous Health², fostering respectful environments³, and building capacity.





¹ Groups of individuals or communities that have been historically marginalized, underrepresented or discriminated against in health care settings.

² 2024 Indigenous Cultural Safety Plan

³ 2024 Code of Conduct

Strategy Pillars and Action Zones

The Strategy aims to help HDH meet our goals of providing equitable health service delivery for all community members and actively address systemic barriers and biases. Implementation of the Strategy will help HDH create inclusive diverse health care environments that foster trust, respect and understanding. To move towards achieving these goals, the Strategy is designed around four pillars and associated action zones. These four Strategy pillars and related Action Zones are outlined below.

	<p>Inclusive HDH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Implement anti-discrimination practices 1.2 Incorporate inclusive design in our environments 1.3 Promote diversity and inclusion
	<p>Enhancing EDI Learning Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Mandate EDI education 2.2 Support meaningful engagement with diverse communities 2.3 Establish tools to foster culturally sensitive communication
	<p>Equitable Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Advance targeted actions for equity-seeking populations 3.2 Optimize use of Language Service Programs 3.3 Improve access to care
	<p>Incorporating EDI into Hospital Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Collect EDI data to inform decision-making 4.2 Ensure a diverse workforce 4.3 Promote open and honest communication around EDI

The Implementation Plan outlines prioritized initiatives to implement under each Action Zone, key steps to ensure that reflection and adaptation occur as lessons are learned, and circumstances change in our communities and environments.

The Strategy represents a significant step forward in our ongoing journey to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive health care system. To be truly responsive to community needs, we recognize that the work is ongoing and that continued collaboration with our staff, physicians, patients and community partners is required to ensure that we meet the needs of those who serve and are served by Hanover & District Hospital.

Core Commitments

HDH has in place five (5) overarching core commitments that describe what we should live up to, and what those served by us can expect to experience. The commitments are reflected in HDH’s policies, procedures and other actions, including this Strategy, to address discrimination and inequity. These commitments are:

1. Respect for Indigenous Peoples

At HDH, we will specifically focus on the rights of all Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – to ensure cultural safety and practice cultural humility. See HDH’s Indigenous Cultural Safety Plan (Appendix B) which includes Indigenous Cultural Safety Principles and guides three areas for implementation to transform the culture of care delivery and improve health outcomes for Indigenous People. These three areas include; 1) Inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and expertise in health care, 2) Welcoming and land acknowledgment of traditional territory, and 3) Right to traditional medicines.

2. Equal Respect, Anti-Discrimination, and Health Equity for All

At HDH, we are dedicated to treating everyone with equal respect, fostering a discrimination-free environment, and advancing health equity for all. We stand against all forms of bias and are committed to providing compassionate, inclusive care to every patient, ensuring that everyone has access to the highest quality healthcare, regardless of their background.

3. Understanding, Compassion and Collaboration

At HDH, we seek understanding of diverse perspectives, show compassion by valuing each individual’s unique experiences, and foster collaboration to build an inclusive, equitable environment. We will establish a shared approach to seek to understand the complex questions we face together.

4. Health and Well-Being for All

At HDH we will protect and support the mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional health and well-being of those we serve and those providing services within, or on behalf of the hospital.

5. Accountability, Growth and Excellence

At HDH, we will take responsibility for living up to these commitments. We will continuously improve the environment within the organization.



STRATEGY PILLAR ONE: Inclusive Hanover & District Hospital

CREATING EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE SURROUNDINGS WHERE EVERYONE FEELS RESPECTED, HEARD AND VALUED.

Hanover & District Hospital is dedicated to implementing anti-discrimination actions into our practices, incorporating inclusive designs in our collective environments, and promoting diversity. These steps will help ensure that all individuals, including those that serve at or are served by HDH, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, experiences and abilities, have access to safe and inclusive environments, services and programs at HDH.

ACTION ZONES:

1.1 Implement anti-discrimination practices

Implementing anti-discrimination practices including building on existing workplace policies and an anti-discrimination policy, is crucial in promoting inclusivity and respect for all individuals. An anti-discrimination policy communicates a strong message to staff, physicians and patients that any form of discrimination is unacceptable. It ensures that everyone will be treated with dignity and respect. It outlines expectations for all members of the hospital, establishes procedures to address discrimination incidents and defines consequences for policy violations.

1.2 Incorporate inclusive design in our environments

Hanover & District Hospital is committed to incorporating inclusive and equitable design into their environment. This is applied to both new and existing spaces, as well as virtual environments, ensuring accessibility and fostering an inclusive culture throughout the hospital. HDH recognizes the importance of considering the linguistic, accessibility and cultural requirements of the diverse communities we serve.

1.3 Promote diversity and inclusion

Hanover & District Hospital recognizes the importance of promoting and respecting diversity and committing to cultivating welcoming and inclusive environments. We will incorporate meaningful ways to acknowledge and recognize diverse communities, fostering a sense of belonging and creating inclusive environments for both staff and individuals served by the hospital. This includes meaningfully acknowledging and recognizing diverse communities and creating spaces for individuals to participate in what is important to them.



STRATEGY PILLAR TWO: Enhancing EDI Learning Culture

**CREATING A SUPPORTIVE LEARNING CULTURE THAT ENABLES VALUE-BASED
DECISION-MAKING AND WELCOMES DIFFERENCES.**

Hanover & District Hospital is dedicated to building capacity to support our strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. We will continue to invest in learning opportunities for staff, through professional and resources development, ensuring that each employee possesses the necessary knowledge, skills and qualities to serve diverse communities with integrity and compassion. We also recognize the importance of community engagement and will develop resources to enhance our abilities in this area, valuing the voices of the communities we serve.

ACTION ZONES:

2.1 Mandate EDI education

Hanover & District Hospital recognizes the importance of developing EDI knowledge among staff. This knowledge provides the necessary skills to integrate EDI principles into daily work. HDH leadership are responsible for addressing learning needs and providing opportunities for staff to build knowledge. We are dedicated to the ongoing development of EDI learning opportunities and resources.

2.2 Support meaningful engagement with diverse communities

Hanover & District Hospital recognizes the importance of developing community engagement resources to effectively involve the diverse communities that we serve. Through continued and meaningful engagement, these resources will help in building and nurturing relationships of trust and respect with individuals, organizations and communities from various backgrounds. This approach will identify systemic barriers, address inequities, and improve the effectiveness and impact of service delivery.

2.3 Establish tools to foster culturally sensitive communication

Communication plays a crucial role in creating an environment where everyone feels safe, valued and respected. Culturally sensitive communication ensures that language is inclusive, uses plain language principles and is accessible for diverse individuals and communities through multiple mediums and languages. It includes messaging and materials that align with HDH's commitment to EDI and prevents unintended harm. Resources will be developed to raise awareness about the significance of safer and inclusive language and culturally relevant materials. Education will be offered to support the implementation of safer language, fostering a culture of respect and inclusivity.



STRATEGY PILLAR THREE: Equitable Care

DELIVER EQUITABLE CARE THAT IS ACCESSIBLE, CULTURALLY SAFE AND RESPONSIVE TO THE DIVERSE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.

Hanover & District Hospital is committed to providing equitable and accessible care that is culturally safe and responsive to the diverse communities we serve. We acknowledge the existence of health inequities and aim to address them through tailored actions supporting equity-seeking groups, and collaborating and co-creating solutions with community and client partners. We will use evidence-informed and innovated approaches, strive to overcome barriers to care and deliver programs and services that cater to the unique needs of diverse communities.

ACTION ZONES:

3.1 Advance targeted actions for equity-seeking populations

Hanover & District Hospital recognizes that there are continued challenges faced by communities that have been historically excluded due to systemic inequities. To address these inequities and provide more equitable health care, HDH implements targeted interventions for specific populations that consider broader determinants of health. These interventions include community outreach programs, health promotion campaigns and collaborations with community organizations. New and existing programs will identify the needs of equity-seeking groups and tailor their programs accordingly. Ongoing monitoring, evaluation and adjustments will be conducted to improve health outcomes over time. The goal is to ensure that everyone regardless of background or circumstances, can access quality health care services.

3.2 Optimize the use of Language Services Programs

Language barriers pose significant challenges for limited English proficient, Deaf, Deaf-blind and Hard of Hearing patients, leading to misunderstandings, miscommunication and negative health outcomes. Language services programs aim to meet the communication needs of individuals regardless of their linguistic backgrounds, enabling full participation in their care. We will continue to grow this service by increasing ease of access and use of translation and interpretation services, and improving the experiences of people receiving these services. Staff and physicians will receive additional training on accessing and effectively utilizing translation and interpretation services.

3.3 Improve access to care

We are committed to improving access to care by using data-driven and evidence-based approaches to better support vulnerable populations in our community. Our efforts will be guided by patient and staff feedback, ensuring that services are responsive, equitable, and focused on delivering the best possible outcomes. By continuously reviewing and renewing protocols, we will enhance the quality and availability of care while addressing emerging needs.



STRATEGY PILLAR FOUR: Incorporating EDI into Hospital Systems

INCORPORATE EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PRINCIPLES IN POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICE DELIVERY ACROSS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS.

Hanover & District Hospital will integrate an EDI lens into our policies, programs and service delivery. By implementing data collection to monitor and evaluate our progress, taking steps towards ensuring workforce diversity, and strengthening communication practices around EDI, we are committed to being accountable to our pursuit of providing the highest quality healthcare services. We are also committed to addressing institutional, structural and systemic barriers through actions that further embed EDI into our hospital systems.

ACTION ZONES:

4.1 Collect EDI data to inform decision-making

Hanover & District Hospital recognizes the importance of collecting data to inform decisions and resource allocations. By capturing disaggregated EDI specific data in a safe and respectful and purposeful manner, the data can inform the development of new and existing evidence-based programs, policies and service deliver, and facilitate ongoing monitoring and evaluation to measure our progress. Developing protocols and educating those serving at HDH on the appropriate and meaningful collection of EDI related data is a vital step in capturing EDI data.

4.2 Ensure a diverse workforce

Hanover & District Hospital recognizes the benefits of workforce diversity. We will ensure a diverse workforce by collecting workforce diversity data to identify potential barriers and guide the development of targeted initiatives to address any gaps. We will conduct a review of current hiring practices to identify barriers to equity and inclusivity in the hiring process.

4.3 Promote open and honest communication around EDI

Hanover & District Hospital recognizes the importance of clear and effective communication in fostering an inclusive culture. We will create safe spaces for discussion to hear about the work and experiences of those working at HDH, and expand on opportunities for communication with leadership. By prioritizing open and honest communication among those working at HDH, we will build trust, promote collaboration and establish a strong reputation as a hospital that values and meets the needs of the communities we serve.

Our Implementation Approach

The implementation plan (Appendix A) illustrates the priorities to enable implementation each Action Zone of the EDI Strategy. To ensure the Strategy remains adaptive while adhering to established directions for the future, implementation will be gradual and intentional. This will encourage an environment of continual learning, adaptations and improvement. Simultaneously, this approach provides the necessary flexibility for implementation to reflect changing priorities and conditions within the hospital and unexpected challenges and opportunities outside of it.

Implementation will include four distinct steps: **ACT, REPORT, ASSESS and ADJUST**.

1. ACT

Through key initiatives listed in the implementation plan and developing opportunities. Hanover & District Hospital will build on existing momentum, learn from implementation and adjust as needed.

2. REPORT

Deliver annual progress report to ensure transparency and accountability. These reports will provide updates on progress on each of the Strategy Pillars and Action Zones.

3. ASSESS

For each of the Strategy Pillars and Action Zones, assessments will occur on an annual basis. This includes reviewing shared efforts and identifying difficult challenges that remain unresolved as well as available and emerging resources. It will also address outcomes from previous year's assessments. This will ensure challenges can be mitigated, opportunities may be enacted upon and progress may continue.

4. ADJUST

Hanover & District Hospital has a diverse portfolio of responsibilities which are subject to many outside influences. As part of a successful EDI strategy, the ability to remain open to new challenges and emerging opportunities is important.

We're on a Path of Continuous Learning, Improvement and Impact

This Strategy and Implementation Plan represents an important milestone, but we know there is always more that can be done to address systemic issues, ensuring that every patient receives the care they deserve, and create an environment where employees feel like they belong, are heard and respected. As we begin to implement this EDI Strategy and Implementation Plan for Hanover & District Hospital, it is important to remember that the work is never truly done. It is up to all of us at HDH to continuously learn and improve, bringing a spirit of humility to our work. Think of the patients and families whose

lives will be positively impacted by the changes we can implement together. Creating a hospital that truly works for everyone.

What Success Looks Like

The objectives and deliverables outlined in our 2025-2030 EDI Plan are things we believe must be addressed first in order to position HDH for future progress. We will know we have been successful when:

- Care at HDH is more patient-centered, culturally informed, equitable and accessible for all patients and families.
- Our workforce and leadership reflect the diverse communities we serve.
- Sustainable EDI infrastructure exists across HDH, and we have even stronger, more authentic partnerships with our community
- Equity-deserving patients have better health outcomes and health inequities are reduced.

This is the future we are working towards – one that brings to life our Mission of *Providing Exceptional Care*, and Vision of *Partnering for Excellence in Rural Health Care*

Appendix A: EDI Implementation Plan

Appendix B: Indigenous Cultural Safety Plan



STRATEGY PILLAR ONE: Inclusive Hanover & District Hospital		
1.1 Implement anti-discrimination practices		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
1.1.1 Implement anti-discrimination policy with clear set of commitments and a culturally safe process for resolving discrimination complaints in a timely manner.	Year 1	
1.1.2 Explore inclusive benefit options (Substituting another day for a Statutory Holiday).	Year 1	
1.1.3 Evaluate the current EDI plan (2025-2030) and prepare a new EDI plan	Year 5	
1.1.4 Include an EDI lens into procurement processes and ensure vendors are aligned with Hanover & District values and commitments to EDI and Reconciliation.	Year 3/4	
1.1.5 Update performance evaluation template to include EDI accountabilities for Leadership and frontline staff.	Year 3/4	
1.1.6 Develop and implement decision making matrix for innovation projects that prioritize EDI.	Year 4/5	
1.2 Incorporate inclusive design in our environments		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
1.2.1 Establish a regular review of the Accessibility Plan as per AODA requirements.	Year 1-5	
1.2.2 Annually assess built environments and virtual spaces and develop plans to improve spaces for patients and staff.	Year 1-5	
1.2.3 Incorporating Inclusive signage in our waiting rooms and common areas to create a more welcoming environment	Year 1	
1.2.4 Incorporate our Land Acknowledgement in our front lobby	Year 1	
1.3 Promote diversity and inclusion		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
1.3.1 Promote the diversity of Hanover and District Hospital's region by sharing statistics showcasing the region's diversity.	Year 5	
1.3.2 Create an EDI awards program to recognize individuals, programs, and services that have gone above and beyond advancing EDI and Reconciliation.	Year 5	
1.3.3 Adopt a diversity calendar to raise awareness of days of significance for diverse communities and create safe spaces for interested groups to celebrate them.	Year 1-5	

1.3.4 Review HDH's strategic plan, mission, vision and values to ensure the organization's commitment to EDI and its EDI Plan is well represented.	Year 1	
1.3.5 Create a method for patients, families and staff can provide feedback on our EDI plan, or their lived experience	Year 1-2	
1.3.6 Ensure the annual Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) includes equity dimensions and improvements to reduce harm for equity deserving communities.	Year 1-5	
STRATEGY PILLAR TWO: Enhancing EDI Learning Culture		
2.1 Mandate EDI education		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
2.1.1 Provide ongoing EDI capacity building opportunities using various modalities and learning options.	Year 1-5	
2.1.2 Develop a broad regional EDI curriculum and implement plan for all staff and physicians, Board of Directors, volunteers and PFAC including Culturally Safe Indigenous training.	Year 1	
2.1.3 Encourage participation on the Health Equity Committee at discuss EDI initiatives at huddles.	Year 1-5	
2.1.4 Achieve 75% initial EDI training completion rate for staff and board	Year 1-5	
2.1.5 Achieve 100% initial EDI training for Executive Leadership Team	Year 1-5	
2.2.5 Present learnings back to Health Equity Committee from community leaders (e.g. Mennonite, Indigenous).	Year 1-5	
2.2 Support meaningful engagement with diverse communities		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
2.2.1 Build strategic partnerships with community partners, and build capacity to engage with the diverse communities we serve.	Year 1-5	
2.2.2 Support meaningful engagements with equity-seeking populations by including representatives of diverse groups within patients and family advisory committees.	Year 1-5	
2.2.3 Engage community leaders, healthcare organizations and academic institutions in meaningful conversations on EDI issues including research opportunities.	Year 1-5	
2.2.4 Incorporate EDI in HDH Engagement and Communications Plan and Social Media Calendar.	Year 1	
2.2.5 Create opportunities for Indigenous Elders to teach and share knowledge at HDH.	Year 1-5	
2.3 Establish tools to foster culturally sensitive communication		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
2.3.1 Develop and adopt a communications guide, including an inclusive and culturally responsive language guide plain language tools and translated patient education materials.	Year 3	
2.3.2 Audit and revise corporate policies to align with culturally sensitive language and minimize unintended harms.	Year 3-5	

2.3.3 Include regular EDI updates in hospital communication tools.	Year 1	
STRATEGY PILLAR THREE: Equitable Care		
3.1 Advance targeted actions for equity-seeking populations		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
3.1.1 Embed EDI and Indigenous Cultural Safety in the policies and decisions support tools process and assess for quality improvement on an ongoing basis.	Year 2-5	
3.1.2 Implement a health equity checklist considering the social determinants of health when planning or developing new or existing programs/services.	Year 3-5	
3.1.3 Explore the enhancement of diverse food services offerings in alignment with patient centered care considering patient length of stay and logistics.	Year 3-4	
3.1.4 Add EDI question to the patient satisfaction surveys to determine any trends of dissatisfaction of cultural needs being met	Year 1	
3.1.5 Collect patient EDI data utilizing the patient registration kiosk and posters.	Year 3-5	
3.2 Optimize use of Language Service Programs		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
3.2.1 Optimize offerings of Language Services for all clinical settings by leveraging technology and innovations.	Year 3	
3.2.2 Enhance access to language and interpretation services for limited English proficient, Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind patients and families.	Year 3	
3.2.3 Track how often language service are being accessed to determine if proper resources are available.	Year 2	
3.2.4 Explore website translation and accessibility options.	Year 3	
3.2.5 Translation of patient consent forms and other required information for patients.	Year 4	
3.3 Improve access to care for inequitable groups visiting the hospital		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
3.3.1 Age Friendly Recognition from the town of Hanover	Year 2	
3.3.2 Wayfinding project	Year 3	
STRATEGY PILLAR FOUR: Incorporating EDI into Hospital Systems		
4.1 Collect EDI data to inform decision-making		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
4.1.1 Create a patient-centered and culturally safe process to collect disaggregated EDI data to improve patient and family experience and health outcomes.	Year 2	
4.1.1 (a) Provide training to registration staff to ensure they are comfortable to collect EDI data from patients.	Year 1-2	

4.1.2 Transparently show data, progress and impact related to EDI efforts and invite community feedback and collaboration.	Year 4	
4.1.3 Collect data on workforce diversity to improve representation of equity-seeking staff and physicians at all levels of the hospital.	Year 1	
4.1.4 Create dashboards for leaders to evaluate and improve health equity indicators.	Year 5	
4.2 Ensure a diverse workforce		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
4.2.1 Conduct a review of current hiring practices (e.g. recruitment, on-boarding, compensation, promotion, retention) to identify barriers to equity and inclusivity in hiring.	Year 2	
4.2.2 Expand representation of equity-deserving groups on patient and family advisory committees, volunteers and Board of Directors.	Year 3	
4.2.3 Partner with Project Search to provide training and potential employment opportunities for individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities	Year 1	
4.3 Promote open and honest communication around EDI		
INITIATIVES:	Progress	Stop Light
4.3.1 Support inclusive employee affinity groups that are open to anyone to join.	Year 1-5	
4.3.2 Establish an EDI Committee with accountability to senior executive team.	Year 1	

References:

1. Fraser Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2028
2. Our Journey from Complacency to Change, 5-Year Equity Diversity and Inclusion Plan, Hamilton Health Science



Indigenous Cultural Safety Plan

Intent and Purpose

Health Care Institutions have not always been the safest places for Indigenous Peoples to access and participate in, as providers and receivers. Systems that were supposed to protect have resulted in harm.

Systemic racism occurs when an institution or set of institutions working together maintain racial inequity. To create change it has to be on the individual and organizational level. Systemic racism is often caused by hidden biases, resulting in doing things the way they have always been done.

It is essential that organizations acknowledge that systemic racism exists and actively confront that unequal power dynamic between groups sustains it. Thus organizations have to consistently assess systems to monitor that outcomes ensure fairness and equity.

To combat racism successfully, it takes a collective effort to acknowledge it exists and design strategies that promote equity and inclusion.

Cultural Safety can only be defined by an Indigenous person receiving care. Culturally safe care does not profile or discriminate but is experienced as respectful and safe and allows meaningful communication and service. To be culturally safe requires positive anti-racism stances, tools and approaches, and the continuous practice of cultural humility. This is why we need to connect to local Indigenous populations.

A culturally competent approach should consider:

- **Holistic Well-being:** Recognizing that health is interconnected—mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- **Trauma-Informed Care:** Acknowledging historical and intergenerational trauma and its impact on health-seeking behaviors.
- **Communication Barriers:** Ensuring medical terminology is explained in an accessible way and respecting traditional knowledge and healing practices.
- **Trust and Relationship-Building:** Understanding the importance of relationships, community, and traditional healing in Indigenous cultures.

In order for this plan to be successful it has to be modeled by the workforce and a whole system approach is required. This is going to make some people uncomfortable, unless we are Indigenous we are not going to understand how they feel or think. Stating we welcome everyone is not enough; we need to understand their needs are unique and different.

Hanover & District Hospital's Indigenous Cultural Safety Plan

Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) is a long term and continuous development process that is linked to Hanover & District Hospital goals and objectives.

Hanover & District Hospital (HDH) is committed to ensuring the ICS plan is embedded throughout the hospital. HDH is committed to addressing and decreasing health inequalities for Indigenous Peoples by providing culturally safe and responsive services. Cultural safety reduces barriers to care, increases the quality and safety of services, positively impacts patterns of service utilization, improves clinical outcomes and leads to fewer disparities in health status between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The purpose of this plan is to provide direction to HDH regarding the organization's approach to ICS by informing the hospital change that will enhance service user experience, include service users as partners in their own care and improve service delivery and health service user outcomes.

Indigenous Cultural Safety Principles

1. Indigenous culturally competent and responsive health care practices are embedded throughout HDH.
2. Indigenous communities are central in the identification, development, delivery and evaluation of health services for Indigenous Peoples.
3. Indigenous cultural practices are included in culturally competent health care delivery for Indigenous Peoples.
4. Indigenous Peoples have an inherent and recognized right to access cultural practices as part of their health care plan.
5. Indigenous Peoples connection to traditional and unceded territories is recognized as an integral component to Indigenous health, well-being and care.
6. Indigenous beliefs are diverse amongst Indigenous Peoples and therefore traditional medicines and health care practices will vary by individual.

<p>We recognize that Hanover and District Hospital lies on the traditional homelands of the Saugeen First Nations and the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation.</p>

Becoming a Culturally Safe Organization

This plan guides HDH to become a Culturally Safe hospital and inform health care provision. It identifies the following three areas for implementation to transform the culture of care delivery and improve health outcomes for Indigenous Peoples.

1. *Inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and expertise in health care*

HDH will actively bring in Indigenous knowledge and expertise at all levels of health service delivery. This will reflect in engagement with Indigenous Leadership, communities and clients, staff education, recruitment and retention and health service delivery.

2. *Welcoming and land acknowledgement of traditional territory*

As official HDH protocol, staff will give a land acknowledgment at all public meetings, public events and conferences.

3. *Right to traditional medicines*

HDH staff will facilitate the inclusion and access to traditional medicines in health care planning on request.

Responsibilities

Executive Leadership will:

- Lead and demonstrate the overall hospital commitment to delivering Indigenous Cultural Safety;
- Endorse and support hospital initiatives and the development of practice guidelines that strengthen Indigenous Cultural Safety;
- Support the meaningful engagement of Indigenous groups in governance and decision making; and
- Plan and deliver services that meet the health care needs of Indigenous Peoples.

Management will:

- Support the meaningful engagement and partnership with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the planning and delivery of services;
- Allow Indigenous Peoples to be a part of the decision making regarding overall hospital care.
- Facilitate the development of policies, procedures and other changes in HDH's operations to enhance Indigenous Cultural Safety;
- Plan and deliver services that meet the health care needs of Indigenous Peoples;
- Respond to practices and barriers that hinder Indigenous Cultural Safety. These practices and barriers may be identified by staff, external agencies or communities;
- Provide on-going professional development opportunities and resources for staff to build Indigenous Cultural Safety; and
- Support staff to incorporate Indigenous Cultural Safety into the delivery of services and to put knowledge and skills into practice.

Front Line Employees will:

- Provide appropriate, equitable and culturally safe care;
- Support Indigenous clients to engage in decision-making around their own care;
- When possible and requested, integrate traditional Cultural Practices into client care plans based on safety and benefit;
- Develop personal and professional knowledge and skills in Indigenous Cultural Safety;
- Identify barriers to services whenever possible and report barriers to management

1. Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge and Expertise in Health Care

HDH will include Indigenous knowledge and expertise in all levels of health service delivery. This will be reflected in engagement of Indigenous Leadership, communities, and clients, staff education, recruitment and retention and health service deliver.

Key guidelines and recommendations to implement Indigenous knowledge and expertise in health care:

Recruitment and Retention

- HDH will ensure all staff will have on-going education and training
- HDH will actively work to increase employment and career opportunities for Indigenous people at all levels of the hospital,
- HDH will seek out and prioritize candidates of Indigenous ancestry for positions that required Indigenous knowledge and expertise
- Hiring Indigenous candidate(s), visibility helps First Nations to be comfortable knowing they are not alone.

Engagement

- HDH will engage and consult with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers in the development of health programs and services for Indigenous clients.
- HDH will create opportunities to Indigenous Staff, Knowledge Keepers, Traditional Practitioners and Elders to share their expertise on health matters for Indigenous Peoples.
- HDH understands the practice of offer a Tobacco Tie and honorariums.

Education

- HDH recommends Indigenous Cultural Safety training for staff.
- HDH provides on going Indigenous Cultural Safety training for staff
- HDH will provide local Indigenous training whenever possible to staff

Practice

- Indigenous service users have a way to identify health options for their care.
- HDH staff will consult and include culturally-specific health care options in health care planning for Indigenous service users.

- HDH staff will include Indigenous Health Care Navigators, Traditional Practitioners or Elders when possible to facilitate the inclusion of cultural support.
- Indigenous cultural practices provide with HDH are conducted by Indigenous Peoples when possible.
- HDH physicians and staff will consult with the Indigenous Navigators when support is requested, understanding they act as a spokesperson for the Indigenous patient.

Documenting Cultural Practices

- Cultural practices and consultation with Indigenous Health Care Navigators and Practitioners will be documented in the patient's care notes.
- The following information will be documented:
 - The name of the navigator, practitioner or traditional knowledge keeper
 - The type of ceremony i.e smudging, birthing, end of life, etc.
 - Details of ceremonies are not included.

2. Welcoming and Acknowledgment of Traditional Territory

As official HDH protocol, staff will give a land acknowledgement at formal meetings, public events or conferences.

Key Guidelines and recommendation to implement Land Acknowledgement

Application

- Recognition of the First Nations unceded homelands where we are conducting business is respectful and is supported by HDH. When holding formal meetings, public events or conferences, recognition will be stated at the beginning.

Land Acknowledgement

- HDH staff will recognize the unceded homelands
- The land acknowledgement can be done by the emcee, speakers and/or HDH staff

3. Right to Traditional Medicines

HDH staff will facilitate the inclusion and access to traditional medicines in health care planning on request. Recognizing each Knowledge Keeper/Elder may follow different traditions for each patient. Staff will consult with them and support them. HDH staff will have access to some traditional medicine (located in medication rooms) if requested by patient or family member.

Some examples of traditional medicine ceremonies: smudging, cedar baths, and sweat lodges.

References:

1. *Indigenous Cultural Safety Policy*, Vancouver Coastal Health
2. *NE'IKAAANIGAANA Toolkit, Guidance for Creating Safer Environments for Indigenous Peoples*, Indigenous Primary Health Care Council, 2021
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