

# Journey of Collaboration

A true partnership transforming care

## Overview

- The Journey of Collaboration aims to support the health and wellness of the Mi'kmaq community of Western NL.
- It is a partnership between NL Health Services - Western Zone, Qalipu First Nation (QFN), the Mi'kmaq community, Western Regional School of Nursing, and Memorial University - Grenfell Campus.
- Funding for the initiative is provided through Indigenous Service Canada's Health Services Integration Fund.
- The Journey of Collaboration Steering Committee is an established structure that has developed effective partnerships, including a community network of over 40 representatives of local bands, community groups, youth, and Elders.



## Goal



The goal of the Journey of Collaboration's community supported framework and action plan is to transform the health-care system through improved collaboration with the Mi'kmaq community. This transformation is in line with the Transformation strategic indicator of NL Health Services' Strategic Plan and aligns with the guidelines, recommendations, and calls for action in Health Accord NL.



The project was established to give voice to the Mi'kmaq community of Western NL to support meaningful change through the co-design of health and wellness strategies, services, and programs. As well, it addresses seven health specific calls to action outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015).



## Process

2020-2022: Engagement with 17+ Mi'kmaq Communities of Western NL.

2023: Acceptance of the Journey of Collaboration framework and action plan.

- The framework's three core principles are **SHARE**, **INCLUDE** and **COLLABORATE**, which the Mi'kmaq community consider essential to the co-design of health and wellness programs.
- The framework lays the foundation for a system that follows etuaptmunk, a two-eyed seeing approach which benefits all people.
- The framework also includes an action plan, which is based on the Mi'kmaq community's recommendations and sets a path forward to achieving accessible, high quality, culturally safe care for Mi'kmaq people.



## Achievements and Impact

2023-2024: During this time, the implementation of the framework and action plan took place. All implemented changes involved community and partners using the framework principles.

### Communication

- Established communication pathways with QFN and Community Network
- Distributed newsletters electronically and in print

### Community wellness events

- Completed three events and 10 are planned for 2024-25

### Culture in healthcare spaces

- Established a partnership with the Mi'kmaq Cultural Foundation

### Indigenous Patient Navigator

- Partnered with QFN and the Indigenous Patient Navigator on shared priorities and initiatives

### Policy changes

- Implemented a smudging policy and established structures to support
- Amended the surgical attire policy regarding sacred items

### Staff education

- Truth and Reconciliation speakers' series - 150 staff
- In-person smudge education - 100 staff
- Virtual smudge education - 25 staff

The impacts of the action plan achievements are felt deeply. Staff and providers are aware of the smudging policy and how to manage a request; Indigenous staff members are empowered to support patients within their sites; and patients have this important cultural need met in a commonly westernized system.

Stories of patients' ability to access the Indigenous Patient Navigator, request smudge medicines and supports, or take their sacred item into surgery exemplify how these changes are improving health-care experiences, which are improving quality of care and health equity for the Mi'kmaq community.



## Next Steps

The expansion of the Journey of Collaboration project across NL Health Services is being explored. A sustainability plan is needed to transition the current stand-alone project into a sustainable Journey of Collaboration for NL Health Services. This will support the development and implementation of an effective provincial Indigenous Health and Cultural Safety Program. This will also spread learnings, create synergies, and continue to support the Mi'kmaq voice.

**ICARE**

- Innovation
- Compassion
- Accountability
- Respect
- Excellence

Journey of Collaboration

