



**Public Health
Santé publique**
SUDBURY & DISTRICTS

December 5, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Honourable Minister Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M5G 2C8

Dear Minister Jones:

Re: Calling for the Selection of Indigenous Municipal and Provincial Appointees for Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts

On behalf of the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts, I am writing to inform you of a recently adopted Board motion that calls for the appointment of Indigenous person(s) to the Board of Health when vacancies arise. Specifically, at its meeting on June 20, 2024, the Board of Health carried the following motion # 41-24,

WHEREAS the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts is committed to ensuring all people in its service area, including Indigenous peoples and communities, have equal opportunities for health; and,

WHEREAS on June 15, 2023, the Board of Health passed [Motion #37-23 Indigenous Engagement Governance Reconciliation Framework](#) which supports the advancement of the Indigenous Engagement Strategy at the governance level; and,

WHEREAS Public Health Sudbury & Districts Indigenous Engagement Strategy's Strategic Direction 1 led to a commitment to promote the selection of Indigenous municipal and provincial appointees to the Board of Health;

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health call upon the municipalities in the service area to advocate for the appointment of qualified Indigenous persons, who are grounded in community, have lived experience, are from this territory and reside in Public Health Sudbury & Districts; and

THAT the Board of Health call upon the municipalities in the service area to appoint qualified Indigenous persons, who are grounded in community, have lived experience, are from this territory and reside in Public Health Sudbury & Districts, where more than one representative appointment exists; and

THAT the Board of Health call upon the Province of Ontario to appoint qualified Indigenous persons, who are grounded in community, have lived experience, are from this territory and reside in Public Health Sudbury & Districts.

In Public Health Sudbury & District's service area, the total population of Indigenous people is 27,600, which is 14% of the population of the district. Of these individuals, 5,700 reside in the 13 First Nations in the district. The remaining are considered urban Indigenous people.¹ Indigenous people disproportionately experience "poorer reported physical and mental health status, and a higher prevalence of chronic conditions (e.g., asthma and diabetes) as well as disabilities compared to non-Indigenous people" (Hahmann & Kumar, 2022; Hahmann et al., 2019). In addition, the life expectancy of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit has been shown to be consistently and significantly lower than that of the non-Indigenous population (Tjepkema et al., 2019)," ² as a direct result of the Canadian government's colonial policies, which have had a reverberating impact on today's systems.

The Board of Health, which governs Public Health Sudbury & Districts, plays a crucial role in addressing the health disparities faced by the Indigenous population. Its primary focus on planning and policy development, fiscal arrangements and labour relations, and accountability and reporting to the Ministry, positions it with a responsibility in this issue. The Board of Health's endorsement of [The Indigenous Engagement Governance ReconciliAction Framework](#), in June 2023 was a significant step in our commitment to reconciliation. The framework's first strategic direction is to inform our work through Indigenous community voices and information. The Board understands that it is imperative to the health of Indigenous peoples that appropriate representatives are present when decisions about Indigenous peoples are made. Having Indigenous representation on the Board of Health, will ensure alignment with this commitment. We also hope that it will

¹ Statistics Canada (2022) 2021 Census

² Yangzom, K., Masoud, H., & Hahmann, T. (2023). Primary health care access among First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit, 2017 to 2020. Ottawa, Canada: Statistics Canada. [Primary health care access among First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit, 2017 to 2020 \(statcan.gc.ca\)](#)

contribute to answering the Truth and Reconciliation: [Call to Action 23](#), which calls upon all levels of government to “Increase the number of [Indigenous] professionals working in the health-care field.”³

There is currently one vacancy for a provincial appointee to our Board of Health according to the Public Appointments Secretariat⁴. We request that your Ministry appoint an Indigenous Provincial appointee to this Board of Health position. Doing so would help advance reconciliation immensely, while also improving the health of a key population group. To facilitate such an appointment, we request that the Public Appointments Secretariat begin to advertise that position, noting a requirement for applicants to be of Indigenous background. Public Health will be pleased to work with local Indigenous candidates to encourage them to submit applications through the Public Appointment Secretariat.

Should your government wish to explore this further, we would be pleased to meet with the Chief Medical Officer of Health’s team or others within your Ministry, as well as the Public Appointments Secretariat to begin to move this forward.

Thank you to your government for its commitment to improving the health of Indigenous people, and your partnership as we work towards reconciliation.

Sincerely,



René Lapierre
Chair, Board of Health

cc: Dr. M. M. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ministry of Health
Dr. Fiona Kouyoumdjian, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Office of the
Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ministry of Health
Public Appointment Secretariat

³ National Center for Truth and Reconciliation. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

⁴ Public Appointments Secretariat: Health Unit Board—Sudbury and District.
<https://www.pas.gov.on.ca/Home/Agency/316>

Nicole Visschedyk, Director of Indigenous Strategy and Engagement, Public Health
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France G elinas, Member of Provincial Parliament, Nickel Belt

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Michael Mantha, Member of Provincial Parliament, Algoma – Manitoulin

Association of Local Public Health Agencies

Ontario Boards of Health