



London Health
Sciences Centre



Children's Hospital
London Health Sciences Centre

Indigenous Voices Matter Community Engagement Session

Summary Report

Great people. Great care.



Table of Contents

Indigenous Voices Matter Community Engagement Session.....	1
Summary Report	1
Introduction	3
Overview	3
Themed Data	4
Indigenous Representation across LHSC.....	4
Culturally Responsive Services	4
Education, Knowledge, and Awareness	4
Action Planning.....	5
Current Areas of Success.....	5
Areas of Improvement	5
Discussion.....	6
Next Steps.....	6

Introduction

"No more words; it's time for action." This was the message that resonated from First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous (FNMIU) attendees who participated in London Health Science Centre's (LHSC) first Indigenous community engagement session, called Indigenous Voices Matter. The event was held on July 19, 2023, at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in London, Ontario.

Attendees felt that "the event has been a long time coming," as First Nations communities lived in these areas before London became a city in 1840. This engagement session enabled Indigenous Peoples to share their truth and express themselves directly to hospital leadership. The event was called a "watershed moment," as it gave people an opportunity to share what happened to them, their children, their grandchildren, their dads, and their moms while obtaining medical treatment at LHSC.

Overview

Approximately 140 participants attended the event, including First Nation Chiefs, leadership from Indigenous health and social organizations, health staff from local and regional health centers, Elders, Youth, Metis Leaders, residential school survivors, Indigenous patients, families, and caregivers. Participants shared a meal to begin the four-hour event and listened to words of welcome from Elder Chris George. Smudging and emotional support from Elders and trained counsellors were available to all attendees throughout the event. Organizers also ensured additional resources were available to attendees including contact information for Patient Relations at LHSC and copies of the organization's policies.

The event featured fourteen (14) breakout sessions with FNMIU people from across southwestern Ontario to share their family, community, and personal experiences at LHSC. During these sessions, participants provided critical feedback on what LHSC needs to do to make services more safe, welcoming and respectful for Indigenous Peoples and implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action. This valuable information will provide the blueprint for developing a strategic plan for the next 3-5 years for LHSC and the Office of Indigenous Health.

During the breakout sessions, participants were asked the following questions:

1. What is LHSC doing well?
2. What is LHSC not doing well?
3. The next time you visit LHSC, what would make a positive experience?
4. What does safe health care mean to you?

Themed Data

During the event, LHSC staff recorded participant responses to the above questions and took extensive notes. The raw information was compiled after the breakout sessions and some common themes emerged.

The data was compiled and themed by the Office of Inclusion and Social Accountability, Office of Health System Transformation staff, an Associate Professor and Research Lead from the Health Action Research Team at Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry, and Ontario Health staff.

Two hundred and ninety-six total responses (296) indicated poor experiences at LHSC. Fifty-four (54) total responses indicated a generally fair to good experience at LHSC.

The following themes emerged in our analysis of feedback:

Indigenous Representation across LHSC

- Indigenous navigation supports are required 24/7 at LHSC sites, particularly with in-service areas such as adult and children's emergency departments, birthing centres, medicine units, intensive care units, and critical care trauma centres.
- Indigenous navigation supports should address safety and harm.
- Increased recruitment and retention of Indigenous Peoples across the organization.
- Indigenous representation at the Board of Directors level.
- Continuous engagement with Indigenous communities.
- Indigenous representation in and around LHSC buildings.

Culturally Responsive Services

- Address safety and harm of Indigenous patients.
- Increase the number of Indigenous Navigators and Social Workers.
- Introduce policies around smudging and traditional medicines.
- Implement trauma and violence-informed care.
- Make Elders services available 24/7 for patients.
- Establish an Elders Circle for patients.
- Increase awareness of discharge planning processes among Indigenous communities.

Education, Knowledge, and Awareness

- Introduce anti-Indigenous racism education and training.
- Establish a culturally responsive and safe patient relations process.

- Ensure staff offer all services to Indigenous patients and develop resources to help them understand their choices (i.e. Non-Insured Health Benefits).
- Improved wayfinding within the hospitals.
- Communication about what services are available to Indigenous patients.
- Develop policies that protect Indigenous Peoples from harm.

Action Planning

- Create an action plan based on the recommendations and feedback received during the engagement session.
- Implement the action plan quickly.
- Meet regularly with FNMIU representatives to report the progress that LHSC has made in the area of Indigenous health.
- Action plan should be based on a holistic model of care.
- Review Joyce's Principle recommendations and create a plan to implement those as well.

Current Areas of Success

- Clinical excellence.
- Friendly and diverse staff.
- Traditional healing.
- Support for families.
- Education and research.

Areas of Improvement

- Racism and stereotyping of patients.
- Not taking Indigenous patients' symptoms seriously.
- Unclear complaint process.
- Lack of communication between staff, providers and patients.
- The hospital is difficult to navigate.
- Compassion for Indigenous families and understanding of the support they provide to patients.
- Improve communication about Indigenous services available to patients.
- Create services that are responsive to the needs of Indigenous communities.
- Better coordination with community services that are available to Indigenous people.
- More resources and better education about anti-racism training and Indigenous cultures.

Discussion

This report has captured the voices and experiences of Indigenous Peoples from communities across southwestern Ontario. Each of the 140 participants who attended the event had a unique story to tell, but a common thread ran through all their experiences: The health-care system is failing them.

Many of the participants spoke of poor treatment due to oppression, racism and discrimination, which causes them harm and makes them fearful to access hospital services. This only serves to perpetuate inequitable health outcomes for Indigenous populations.

The extensive amount of feedback gained from the Indigenous Voices Matter Community Engagement Event has provided a view of Indigenous Peoples' experiences and provides a clear demonstration of why structural change is needed urgently.

Next Steps

It is clear that continued meaningful engagement with members of local Indigenous communities is required to create a path forward.

LHSC is deeply grateful to the 140 FNMIU people who came forward to share their experiences in an effort to affect real change within the health-care system. The feedback that we received from community members is invaluable and will help set the course for LHSC to improve experiences, care, services and outcomes for Indigenous Peoples.

It will be necessary for LHSC to take a collaborative approach with local Indigenous communities to create an action plan to mobilize as an organization. It is time for LHSC to act by prioritizing quick improvements that can be achieved easily and moving forward steadily on more significant commitments.

This critical work will take time, but change is necessary to introduce new ways of providing health care for equity-denied people. LHSC is committed to making meaningful changes in how we deliver care to Indigenous populations and working within the larger health-care system to better address the needs of these communities.