



## Executive Summary

# Pathway to Oral Health Equity for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Canadians: Knowledge Exchange Workshop

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A copy of full proceedings of this workshop will be forwarded when ready or can be obtained by contacting either Dr. Schroth or Dr. McNally.

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### **PURPOSE:**

This workshop brought representatives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations together with clinicians and health promoters, health service program managers and decision-makers, and academics, to network and share current evidence focused on improving oral health for Canada's First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. (A list of 24 attendees and their affiliations are found on page 4).

A renowned Canadian Indigenous Elder, Elder Albert Marshall (Eskasoni Mi'kmaq First Nation, Cape Breton Nova Scotia) offered to the world the principle of "Two-eyed Seeing" which *recognizes the benefits of seeing from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing, and to see from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing, and finally to use both of these eyes together.* This metaphor laid the foundation for this workshop through the following 3 objectives:

**Objective 1 – "Two-Eyed Seeing":** To understand key oral health concerns facing Canadian First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people by fostering the exchange of Indigenous knowledge and bio-behavioural knowledge amongst attendees.

**Objective 2 – Enhancing knowledge and practice together:** First, share wisdom from existing, culturally-informed and community-based approaches (programs and policies), promising practices, and health promotion projects and, next, identify gaps and priorities.

**Objective 3 – Next steps:** Explore opportunities for future collaborations, team building, and research planning.

To meet these aims, a detailed agenda facilitated a one and a half day "conversation" amongst participants. We began with a welcoming message of prayer and teaching from Elder Margaret Lavallee, of the Sagkeeng First Nation who is the Elder in Residence at the University of Manitoba.

Following a round of introductions of all participants, representatives from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Manitoba Métis Federation, and Nova Scotia Tui'kn Partnership shared perspectives on oral health, of research in general, and why their organization was motivated to attend this workshop on oral health equity. Speakers provided examples of successful research initiatives and most importantly, shed light on ways to ensure that meaningful research partnerships are developed for the benefit of members of their communities.

This was followed by three facilitated mini-panel discussions (including: Clinicians and Health Promoters; Health Service Program Managers and Decision-makers; and Academics) where panelists shared perspectives on key issues, innovations and connections to oral health research arising from each of their sectors.

Presentations and panel discussions generated further questions and information sharing that provided the basis for the plenary discussion at the end of Day 1. This included attention to

successful approaches for research as well as an acknowledgement of current gaps and challenges. A synopsis of four key themes (Communities, Measurement, Approaches, and Providers) arising from both the formal and informal discussions of Day 1 appears in the full proceedings. It is worth noting that particular emphasis was placed on the importance of meaningful partnerships for developing research ideas and priorities (i.e. “nothing about us without us”), that research is a two-way street involving learning in both directions, and that current pan-Canadian/pan-Indigenous initiatives (e.g., Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Pathways) may not be sufficiently attentive to the distinction-based research and health service needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. There were also recommendations that research must have benefits for communities and the need for building research and oral health provider capacity among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

The focus of day two was to examine next steps (i.e. future collaborations, team building, and research planning) with specific attention to current research priorities as outlined by the CIHR Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples initiative. A brief presentation on the current status of CIHR Pathways preceded the morning’s discussions.

In keeping with our commitment for the workshop to follow an iterative process whereby the conversation would lead to priorities for further discussion, Day 2 activities flowed from Day 1 themes. Participants were somewhat divided on whether to continue with group discussions involving multiple disciplines and sectors or to focus discussions for research priorities relative to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations represented at the workshop. The result was that the morning was divided in half. During the first part of the morning, small groups engaged in general discussions related to CIHR Pathways priorities and opportunities for advancing oral health research. Discussions for the second part of the morning were distinction based, following from specific contexts and processes of the individual First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations that were participating in the workshop. Here, discussions centered on the potential for networking and establishing on-going partnerships.

Overall, feedback provided by participants at the conclusion of the workshop was very positive. Virtually all participants appreciated the “two-eyed seeing” approach to the conversation and reported that this was done successfully. A number of participants remarked that the workshop was too short and could have easily extended another half day. The majority of participants responded at the close of the workshop that they would be interested in participating in a research network focused on Indigenous oral health equity.

## WORKSHOP ATTENDEES:

Avery-Kinew	Kathi	Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
Bassily	Mena	Manitoba Métis Federation
Bhullar	Rajinder	University of Manitoba
Chartier	Martin	Public Health Agency of Canada - Office of the Chief Dental Officer
Cooney	Peter	Public Health Agency of Canada - Office of the Chief Dental Officer
Cullum	Jodi	Institute of Musculoskeletal Health & Arthritis Assistant Director
El-Gabalwy	Hani	University of Manitoba
Emami	Elham	Université de Montréal
Hai-Santiago	Khalida	Manitoba Health
Harrison	Rosamund	University of British Columbia
Jones	Greg	First Nations and Inuit Health Branch-Atlantic Region
Lavallee	Margaret	University of Manitoba (Elder in Residence)
Lavoie	Joseé	University of Manitoba
Lillies	Chris	Manitoba Métis Federation
Martin	Debbie	Dalhousie University
McKenna	Meghan	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
McKinstry	Sheri	First Nations Dentist
McLeod	Jim	First Nations and Inuit Health Branch - Manitoba Region
McNally	Mary	Dalhousie University
Moffatt	Michael	University of Manitoba
Nancarrow	Tanya	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
Neufeld	Hannah	Western University
Rudderham	Sharon	Eskasoni Community Health Centre, Nova Scotia
Schroth	Robert	University of Manitoba
Star	Leona	Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
Ukashi	Ran	Manitoba Métis Federation
Walker	Mary Lou	First Nations Health Authority, British Columbia
Kliewer	Eleonore	Workshop recorder
McGregor	Shauna	Workshop recorder
Wener	Mickey	Workshop facilitator

