



HEALTH & WELLNESS

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FRANCES CHARTRAND
MINISTER

PREAMBLE

The Manitoba Métis Federation's (MMF) Health & Wellness Department (MMF-HWD) was established in 2005 with the vision of "A Well Métis Community." Committed to improving the health of Red River Métis Citizens across Manitoba and beyond, the MMF-HWD leads strategic efforts in research, health prevention, service delivery, community programming, and health analytics. Guided by ethical standards and inclusivity, the department ensures that Red River Métis voices inform all initiatives and that Citizens have access to relevant and timely health information.

The 2024/2025 Annual Report marks a year of continued progress. Building on the expansion of its Research, Clinical, Community Programming, and Policy and Health Information branches in 2021/2022, MMF-HWD advanced its mission through strengthened partnerships with federal and provincial governments, academic institutions, and health organizations including the University of Manitoba, the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, Diabetes Canada, and Dynacare. Notably, three community consultations were conducted and positively received.



With continued staff dedication and strong Citizen engagement, MMF-HWD remains committed to advancing Red River Métis health and well-being.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

The Community Programming branch, established in 2022, enables the MMF-HWD to address Red River Métis Citizens' health needs through a wide range of programs and initiatives. By engaging with the community and listening to their concerns, MMF-HWD can tailor health programming to be relevant, accessible, and positively impact the well-being of all Citizens.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

Since 2017 when your Red River Métis Government developed its first Métis Health Benefits Prescription Drug Program, eligible Red River Métis seniors and Elders now have access to essential prescription drug coverage. To be eligible, individuals must be Red River Métis Citizens over the age of 65 and have an income of \$35,000 or less. As of April 2021, Red River Métis Citizens over 55 years of age became eligible to apply to the program.

The success of the program is a result of the collaboration of the MMF-HWD, the Red River Métis Community Resource Department, and MEDOCare Pharmacy. Currently, over 1,000 Red River Métis Citizens are registered in the program and receive financial support toward their medication, as well as comprehensive prescription consultation.

MÉTIS SENIOR VISION CARE INITIATIVE

Vision is an important part of maintaining independence. The Métis Senior Vision Care Initiative offers vision care services including managing healthy eye care, eye examinations, and prescription eyeglasses – all of which make this possible.

Eligibility requirements for this program are the same as those for the Prescription Drug Program. However, there is value added for all clients regardless of age or income. Any Red River Métis Citizen can benefit from a negotiated rate of \$150 per set of prescription glasses, including bifocals or progressive lenses, by presenting their Citizenship card at the time of purchase.

MENTAL HEALTH LINE

The MMF-HWD understands that many of our Red River Métis Citizens are experiencing feelings of sadness, stress, and anxiety. To provide support during these challenging times, the Mental Wellness phone line was established in December 2020 and continues to cater to the specific needs of Red River Métis Citizens. This free helpline, staffed by Red River Métis counsellors, received over 700 calls in the first year it was initiated.

CLINICAL SERVICES

Established in January 2021, the Clinical Services team of the MMF-HWD is dedicated to serving Red River Métis Citizens of Manitoba. This branch coordinates two mobile health units in the Southern and Northern Regions. These health units offer blood pressure monitoring, diabetic footcare, and Point-of-Care Testing (POCT) for health issues such as diabetes and high cholesterol, as well as general health. For up-to-date news regarding our clinic, check the MMF website.

Services provided by Clinical Services include:

- ∞ 5-minute check-ins with Registered/Licensed nurses for one-on-one discussions about concerns;
- ∞ HbA1C tests with results in three minutes to monitor sugar levels;
- ∞ Cholesterol level tests with results in seven minutes;
- ∞ COVID-19 and other vaccinations; and
- ∞ Diabetic foot care by Registered foot care nurses.

The mission of Clinical Services is to improve the health and wellness of Red River Métis Citizens across all seven Regions through education and service delivery.

To book the Red River Métis Mobile Clinic, contact your Local chair or office, or contact us at:

Email: clinicinfo@mmf.mb.ca, Phone: 1-833-390-1041 Ext: 3

MICHIF MANOR, MEDICAL HOUSING INITIATIVE

In collaboration with the MMF's Housing and Property Management Department, the MMF-HWD has been working on developing Michif Manor, which will provide short-term accommodation to Red River Métis Citizens and their families who are in the City of Winnipeg for medical appointments and treatment.

HEALTH RESEARCH

Since its inception in 2005, the Health Research team has been conducting qualitative research to understand the experiences and perspectives of Red River Métis Citizens. Our goal is to create Red River Métis-specific health knowledge by capturing lived experiences through consultations, discussion groups, and personal interviews.

ONGOING PROJECTS (2023- CURRENT)

1. Maternal Health in Red River Métis: Improving access to maternal and child health care services among Red River Métis women: With a focus on maternal and child health, this project aims to improve access to culturally appropriate maternal care

services for Red River Métis women. Focus groups gather lived experiences of maternal health journeys, increase access to maternal and child health care services, and raise awareness about related risks through educational sessions.

2. Using therapeutic and culture-based approaches to support the well-being of care partners of Red River Métis living with dementia: Recognizing our aging Red River Métis population and rising rates of dementia, this project aims to support the wellness of the Red River Métis Citizens who care for Red River Métis living with dementia. This will be achieved through cultural activities and by offering counselling support to address the specific needs and challenges of care partners.

3. Connect to Change: With this project, the team will deliver group-based programs that foster social support and increase physical activity among our Citizens who smoke to decrease commercial tobacco use and improve health outcomes.

4. Clearing the Air: Given the high prevalence of smoking-related morbidities among Red River Métis, the MMF-HWD strives towards implementing the Clearing the Air: Red River Métis-specific Tobacco Reduction Strategy (2025). The project focuses on a culturally sensitive, community-driven approach to addressing not only tobacco cessation but also prevention, education, and support services all aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of tobacco smoking.

5. Meta-Care – Culturally Appropriate Resources and Education: Expanding on the findings published in The Red River Métis Cancer Journey in Manitoba (2023), there remains inadequate support for Citizens navigating provincial cancer resources, especially for those impacted by metastatic breast cancer. To better understand their lived experiences, the MMF-HWD will host focus group with Citizens that will inform the development of educational resources aimed at improving awareness and access to specialized supports.

6. Riel personalized care: In alignment with the MMF-HWD's ongoing commitment to address health disparities and distinctions-based cancer care, the project supports implementation of the Red River Métis Cancer Strategy (2023) – ensuring every Citizen has access to personalized, culturally safe cancer care. Key initiatives include increasing awareness of prevention and screening options, the development of precision oncology, fostering cultural safety among cancer care specialists, and improving navigation of provincial services throughout the cancer journey.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

The research team completed the following projects in the past year, adding to the growing body of Red-River Métis-specific health knowledge:

1. REACH: Radon Education and Assessment for Community Health: The research team installed radon tests in the homes

of Red River Métis Citizens, provided mitigation systems to those with higher-than-recommended radon levels and shared information about the risks of radon exposure.

2. Red River Métis Perspectives on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID): This research project represented Red River Métis voices in federally issued MAID monitoring reports. The project explored Red River Métis perspectives on MAID and identified their needs and concerns related to this topic

3. Distance to Care: Cancer Outcomes for Red River Métis in Rural Manitoba: Addressing barriers to cancer care identified in the Red River Métis Cancer Strategy, this project investigates challenges experienced by Red River Métis Citizens living in remote and rural areas during their cancer journeys. Health data, spatial mapping software, and consultations with Citizens continue to inform program development and policy to improve cancer journeys for those in rural and remote communities.

If you are interested in participating in any of the studies or learning more, contact healthresearch@mmf.mb.ca

POLICY AND HEALTH INFORMATION

The Policy and Health Information (PHI) team was created in January 2022 and continues to work on the following initiatives to develop Red River Métis-specific information to support policies, programs, and services for Red River Métis Citizens:

1. COVID-19 Surveillance: The Looking Backwards to Plan for the Future: COVID-19 Surveillance of Red River Métis project is a Red River Métis-specific data linkage study examining aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic in our community. The goal is to enhance knowledge of health and well-being and build upon existing understanding of COVID-19 in this population.

2. Red River Métis Regional Health Survey: Conducted in conjunction with the University of Manitoba, this large-scale project aims to understand the health experiences and needs of Red River Métis Citizens. The survey results will contribute to policy and programming to improve the health and well-being of Red River Métis throughout the province.

3. Long-term and Continuing Care: Long-term and continuing care (LTCC) includes health, social, and residential support services for seniors and those living with chronic disabilities in long-term care facilities. By developing a Red River Métis-specific framework, LTCC aims to promote holistic well-being among Red River Métis Citizens in Manitoba.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

1. Arthritis and Mental Health: To support our Citizens living with arthritis and mental illness, this project aims to deliver mind-body interventions including yoga and meditation to help manage symptoms and improve the quality of life of Red River Métis living with arthritis and mental health challenges.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

The MMF-HWD team is continuously engaging with Red River Métis Citizens. In November 2024, consultations were conducted with population from The Pas, Thompson, and the Northwest Region. In February 2025, the team actively engaged with Red River Métis Citizens from Winnipeg, Southwest, Southeast and Interlake Regions. In March 2025, consultations with Red River Métis health professionals took place involving healthcare providers from across the seven MMF Regions. The topics covered a range of important issues, including commercial tobacco reduction, cancer, dementia, long-term care, and the impact of COVID-19 on mental health. During these consultations, we actively listened to our Citizens, who shared their valuable experiences with various health systems. The focus groups facilitated productive conversations where individuals discussed their health and wellness journeys and expressed their aspirations for future health services.

PARTNERSHIPS

Over the past year, MMF-HWD staff have continued to build working partnerships to enhance Red River Métis health and well-being, which include:

- ∞ Red River Métis Community Resource Department and MEDOCare Pharmacy to assist in both the Prescription Drug Program and the Senior Eyeglass Program;
- ∞ Public Health Agency of Canada;
- ∞ Canadian Institute on Health Research;
- ∞ University of Manitoba; and
- ∞ The Children's Health Research Institute, Diabetes Canada, Dynacare Laboratories, and Boehringer Ingelheim, a pharmaceutical company.

In addition, the MMF-HWD works closely at a strategic level with the Canadian Partnerships against Cancer and CancerCare Manitoba to address Red River Métis-specific preventative issues. It also interacts closely with the 7 MMF Regions and the Infinity Women Secretariat to connect with the Red River Métis Citizens at the local level about their health and wellness concerns.

In conclusion, the MMF-HWD remains committed to collaborating closely with Red River Métis families, communities, partners, and funders as we work diligently to strengthen the department and improve programming throughout the province. Looking ahead to the next year, the MMF-HWD anticipates continued growth and progress, with a passionate team of experienced staff working together to create knowledge and enhance programs and services for the well-being of our valued Red River Métis Citizens.