

HEALTH & WELLNESS



Frances Chartrand
Minister

Preamble

The Manitoba Métis Federation - Health & Wellness Department (MMF-HWD) was established in 2005. Over time the department has solidified a vision of “A Well Métis Community” with its mission and commitment to create and facilitate the use of knowledge to that will contribute to improving Métis health status in Manitoba and beyond. Strategically, the MMF-HWD plays a leadership role in its vision of “A Well Métis Community” by developing and using health prevention and prevention research, service delivery and interventions, community programming and health analytics. MMF-HWD goal is to enhance MMF capacity to lead extraordinary and innovative interventions to assure a positive impact on improving Métis health status and healthcare programs and services use.

MMF-HWD staff ensures operational activities are ethical and inclusive of Métis Citizens where appropriate. Métis Citizens are at the heart of and often directly involved in our priority of building Métis-specific knowledge. Through HWDs initiatives Métis Citizens get access to a number of community health programs, prescription drug program, COVID-19 supports, and the most up-to-date knowledge on Métis health issues.

Annual Report

Fiscal year 2021/2022 was a period of substantial growth for the HWD. The Department has established three new Branches (Clinical, Community Health Programs, and Health Policy and Information Management) in addition to an already existing Research Branch (Figure 1). With several new hires including project staff to support the direction and the objectives of the newly re-formed Department.

Leadership & Management



Health Services



Clinical Services



Health Information
& Policy



Community
Programs

The Department has continued building the relationships with Federal Government (ISC, FNIHB), University of Manitoba, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. The Department also established new partnerships with Diabetes Canada and Dynacare, re-started conversations with the province on Clinical Preventative Services Plan and Mental Health. HWD staff established and continued providing COVID-19 supports, such as vaccination, testing, and mental health therapy. The Department held its first Health Summit, which was well received in the community. Despite the limitations that COVID-19 created we met projects' milestones.

Community Programming

We are very excited for this branch of our department, we are going to be able to respond to our Citizen's needs. In partnership with the Housing Department, Michif Manor will be able to provide short term accommodation to Citizens and their families who are in the City of Winnipeg for medical appointment and appointments/treatment.

Prescription Drug Program

Since 2017 when your Métis Government developed its first Métis Health Benefits Prescription Drug Program, eligible Métis seniors and Elders have had access to essential prescription drug coverage. To be eligible, individuals must be Métis Citizens, over the age of 65, and have an income of \$25,000 or less. As of April last year, 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 Health & Wellness Department, the Métis Community Liaison Department (MCLD), and MEDOCare Pharmacy. Currently, over 1,000 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 for Citizens; 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. Prior to COVID-19, Prairie Eye Care provided mobile vision care services throughout the MMF Regions. Once public health restrictions have been lifted, clinics will begin to be offered again.

Eligibility requirements for this program are the same as those for the Prescription Drug Program. However, there is value added for all Citizens regardless of age or income. Any 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

We know that COVID-19 has been hard on many and may have caused feelings of sadness, stress, and anxiety. In December 2020, the Mental Health Wellness phone line was set up to assist Citizens with any mental health issues during the pandemic isolation and to ensure that Citizens' needs were met. This telephone line is offered free of charge to Citizens and is answered by Métis counsellors. In the 2021-2022 fiscal year the line received over 700 calls. Women utilize the line at much higher rates than men with 92% (646) of callers being female and 8% (57) males to date. Most callers are in the 60-70 age range. Most of the calls came from the Winnipeg and Northwest Regions. 50% of the calls are related to check-

ins (returning callers), 16% for anxiety, 7% for depression. We encourage anyone who is feeling "out of sorts" to call 1-833-390-1041 extension 1.

Clinical Services

One of the new programs offered in our department is Clinical Services. In addition to the vaccine clinics, this program will be coordinating two mobile Health Units – one for the south and one for the north. These Health Units will offer blood pressure monitoring, diabetic footcare, and Point-of-Care Tests (POCT) to identify the clinical markers of diabetes and other chronic illnesses among the population. The Mobile Health Units are up and running, for up-to-date news, check the MMF website.

We understand that there is a need for an addictions treatment center and have been working on ideas to make that a reality. Our plan the next year is to have a Métis-specific center to provide a whole range of treatment services for Citizens.

COVID-19 Testing

Early on it was recognized that for many Citizens a long wait was required to get COVID-19 testing done at the provincial sites, and an even longer wait occurred before tests results were reported to them. Your MMF President and Cabinet responded to this by contracting the services of a private company - Intrinsic Analytics - to do the testing. Citizens who called our line were booked for testing either same day or the next day and usually received their results within 24 hours.

COVID-19 Vaccination Program

Starting April 2021, your Health & Wellness and MEDOCare Pharmacy organized vaccination clinics for Citizens, their families, and staff. Located at 150 Henry Avenue (MMF Home Office) people were encouraged to get first, second, and booster doses of the vaccine to protect them against COVID-19 in an environment that was friendly and welcoming to them. At first, the vaccine clinic was set up Home Office at 150 Henry in Winnipeg. Our President led



the way in being among one of the first to get his needle! We were then able to offer vaccines to those who were not able to go out of their homes. We also visited sites in the Northwest, Interlake, and Southeast Regions to do vaccination. If you want to book an appointment call 1-833-390-1041 extension 3. During 2021-2022 over 3,000 doses has been given out to our Métis Citizens.

Community Consultations

In June the Health and Wellness team conducted consultations with Citizens from the Winnipeg, Southeast, Southwest, and Interlake Regions. Topics included health legislation, medical transportation, vaccine hesitancy, and mental health and addictions. We heard from Citizens on their experiences through various health systems and observed productive conversation in focus groups, where Citizens shared their health and wellness journeys and their hopes for future health services. Consultations with the northern regions of Northwest, The Pas and Thompson are set to occur later this fall.

Partnerships

Over the past year, HWD staff have continued to build working partnerships to enhance Métis health and wellness, which include:

- MCLD and MEDO Care Pharmacy, to assist in both the Prescription Drug Program and the Senior Eyeglass Program,
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC),
- Canadian Institute on Health Research (CIHR),
- University of Manitoba (UM), and
- The Children's Health Research Institute (CHRIM), Diabetes Canada, Dynacare Laboratories, and a pharmaceutical company called Boehringer Ingelheim.

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

Health & Wellness staff took part in the Provincial Youth Forum held this year. Not only were they able to interact with several Youth as they described the projects they are involved with, but they were able to create an opportunity for two Métis students who were also involved. They worked with the department over the summer and will continue to be engaged with the Manitoba Métis Federation.

In conclusion, the Health & Wellness Department will continue to work with their families and communities, partners, and funders as they continue to build the department and enhance social programming and services for Métis Citizens across the province. The HWD will also continue to foster meaningful relationships and partnerships across the departments and with the health care system, to ensure the health care needs of the Métis are identified and that programs and services are developed to meet them. Over the next year, the department anticipates continued growth with a group of committed, experienced staff working together to create knowledge and improve programs and services for our Citizens.

