

BACKGROUND

Despite decades of reports calling for changes, Indigenous children and youth continue to face significant health and social disparities compared with their non-Indigenous counterparts. Maternal and child health concerns persist, and infant mortality rates are double. Indigenous children and youth experience higher rates of injury, suicide, obesity, diabetes, and other chronic conditions.

In 2022, the Alberta Children's Hospital (ACH) and Indigenous Community partners endeavored to vision an Indigenous Child Health Team to support families across the continuum of care, hospital to home. This work stemmed from the Indigenous Health Action Plan (IHAP) spearheaded by Alberta health Services and Indigenous partners honoring a commitment to improve relationships, service delivery and health outcomes for all Indigenous people.

Alberta is home to a large Indigenous population with rich heritages and cultures. The Alberta Children's Hospital is located in the traditional territory of the Blackfoot peoples, which is within the Treaty 7 area including Siksika, Stoney Nakoda and Tsuut'ina First Nations. The Calgary Zone is also home to Métis peoples, Inuit peoples, and a large urban Indigenous population.

OBJECTIVES

The following goals address needs identified by Indigenous communities as part of extensive engagement, including talking circles, conversations, and storytelling specific to Indigenous child health.

- 1. Culturally responsive care for Indigenous children and families
- 2. Coordinated care across the continuum of pediatric and Indigenous health services
- 3. Holistic care addressing the social determinants of health and equitable healthcare access for Indigenous children and families (19th call to action, TRC)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



Honouring a commitment to improve relationships, service delivery and health outcomes for all Indigenous people, AHS -Calgary Zone hosted extensive community talking circles and conversations to inform development of an Indigenous Health Action Plan (IHAP 2020). Participants included Indigenous patients and families, elders, First Nations health directors, representatives from urban Indigenous-led non-profit agencies, healthcare providers, the AHS Wisdom Council and AHS leaders.

Through these conversations, gaps and challenges were identified and new ideas were developed. The conversations culminated at a gathering at Blackfoot Crossing in May 2019, on the sacred ground where Treaty 7 was signed. More than 70 AHS and Indigenous community partners came together to review what had been shared and to develop concrete ideas to shape next steps. The IHAP was approved by the Calgary zone leadership team in 2019. The Approval Ceremony took place in January 2022.

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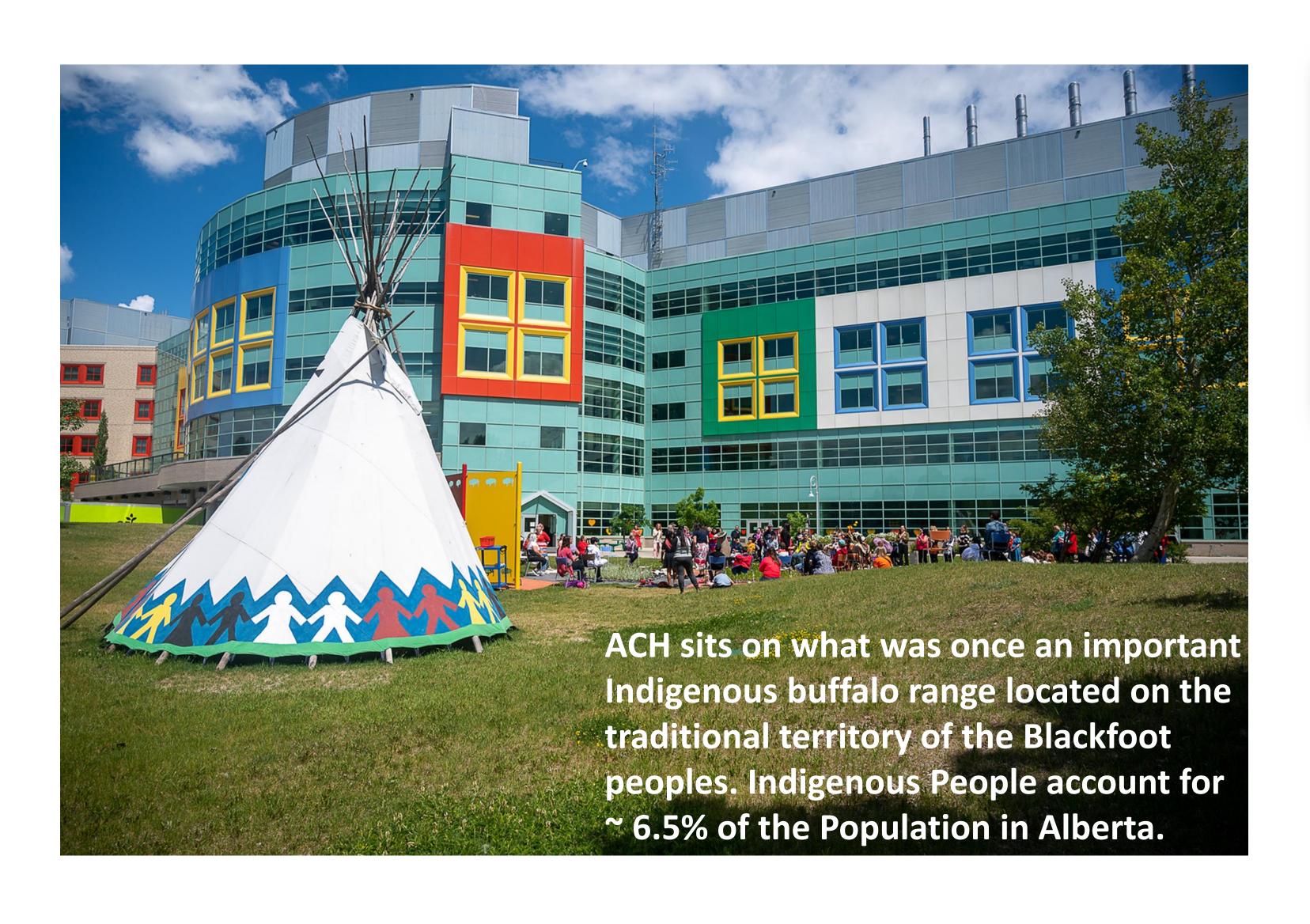
Alberta Children's Hospital Indigenous Child Health Team

SERVICE MODEL

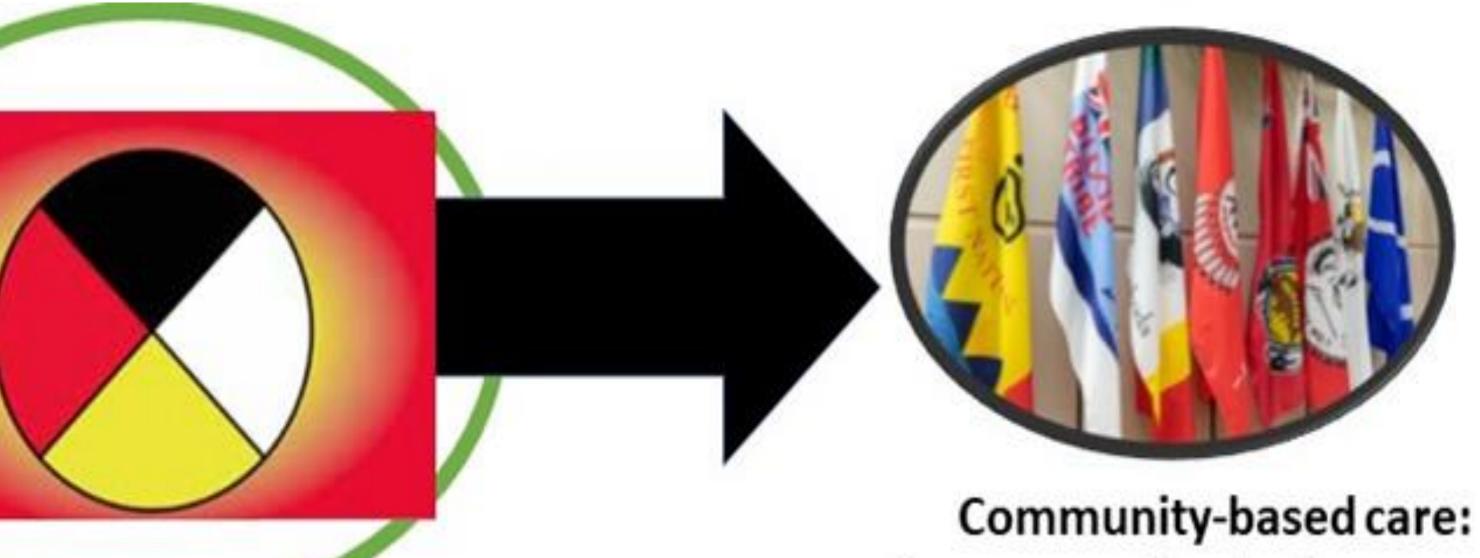
- Tertiary level specialized care: inpatient and ambulatory services Indigenous Indigenous Clinical Social Clinical Care Work Supports Coordinators

Biomedical

Systemic



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services supporting Indigenous Communities in and around Calgary

Indigenous Child Health Team

Child, Family, Community

Indigenous Hospital Liaisons & Cultural Wellness Coordinator

Community-Based, Local Indigenous Navigators

Psychosocial

Spiritual

Cultural



References

Alberta Health Services Publication. Calgary Zone – Indigenous Health Action Plan: Creating a New Path to Indigenous Health in the Calgary Zone. 2020. Available from: www.ahs.ca/ihapcz. Accessed December 2022. Brooks-Cleator L, Phillips B, Giles A. Culturally safe health initiatives for indigenous peoples in Canada: a scoping review. Can J Nurs Res. 2018;50(4):202–213. doi:10.1177/0844562118770334 Di Lallo et al. Building bridges for Indigenous children's health: Community needs assessment through talking circle methodology. Risk Management and Healthcare Policy 2021:14;3687-3699 Government of Canada. Jordan's Principles; 2019. Available from: https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/services/jor dans-principle.html. Accessed December 2022. Kim PJ (2019) Social determinants of health inequities in indigenous Canadians through a life course approach to colonialism and the residential school system, Health Equity 3:1, 378–381, DOI: 10.1089/heq.2019.0041 Lachance, N; Hossack, N; Wijayasinghe, C; Yacoub, W; Toope, T. Health Determinants for First Nations in Alberta. Health Canada Report 2020.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Truth and reconciliation commission of Canada: calls to action; 2015. Available from: http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf. Accessed December 2022.





IMPACT / SIGNIFICANCE

There is great heterogeneity among Indigenous communities, therefore, a multi-pronged approach that includes community specific supports and self-determination is important. Along with diversity of culture, language and community, there are also substantial differences in the provision of health and social services, resources, and community engagement. Extensive stakeholder and community engagement has informed this unique service model, which is now in an early stage of implementation.

This initiative aims to decrease barriers, improve health outcomes, and keep children in their communities with better supports and follow-up through targeted intervention and direct understanding of the unique health care needs of Indigenous Children and families.



Alberta Health Services

Indigenous Wellness Core

Alberta Children's Hospital