

# Reconciliation Action Plan

2022-23



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## Territory Acknowledgment

HQC acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakoda, Lakota and the homeland of the Métis. As a provincial agency, we are dedicated to supporting Reconciliation and to honouring and respecting all people within the treaties of Saskatchewan.



## Statement from the Chief Executive Officer

At Health Quality Council (HQC), our mission is to accelerate improvement in health and health care throughout the lands now known as Saskatchewan, with a vision for optimal health and health care for everyone. The history of colonization and its policies have had a lasting, intergenerational impact on the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan. To accelerate improvement in health and health care, HQC must take action toward reconciliation and cultural responsiveness.

The first step is acknowledging the truth of our shared history and its impacts, which continue today. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has described reconciliation as the “ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.” As a change agent within the Saskatchewan health-care system, HQC can help to build these relationships and create the conditions that will lead to meaningful change.

This plan outlines actions we will take during the 2022-23 fiscal year to address Calls to Action that are within our mandate. This is a long-term commitment—each year, we will report on our progress over the previous year and identify new actions we can take in the upcoming year.

We are grateful to all who helped to build this plan in a good way, including the H Q C Cultural Advisory Committee, the board of directors, and HQC staff and leaders.

## Vision of Reconciliation

HQC envisions a health-care system that is equitable and just for all, where the voices of First Nations and Métis peoples are not only heard but also seen in the spaces and practices. Through reconciliation, HQC hopes that the unique and vibrant cultures of Indigenous Peoples are amplified and celebrated. HQC envisions working in partnership with First Nations and Métis people to improve health and health care for the next generation of children with self-determination as the foundation of the partnership.

## Introduction

First Nations and Métis have distinct and unique cultures and connections to the land, waters, animals and plants that has been passed on by their ancestors for thousands of years. Before the arrival of settlers to Turtle Island and colonization, Indigenous Peoples had their own ways of knowing, languages and concepts of wellness. In Saskatchewan, there is a wide diversity of First Nations cultures including the Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Dakota, Lakota and Nakoda. There are also many Métis who have distinct culture from that of the First Nations people and their own language known as Michif.

Colonization has had negative impacts on many aspects of Indigenous Peoples' lives which has affected their health and well-being greatly. Colonization created many systemic injustices such as dispossession of Indigenous People from their land to unsuitable locations, removal of children from their family's home and care against their will, banning cultural events and celebrations, and enforcement of laws that were built on racism and oppression, just to name a few. Most of these injustices are still happening today which is why it is crucial that organizations, individuals, and governments do their part to reconcile with Indigenous Peoples by addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and taking meaningful action.

In 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created to contribute to truth, healing, and reconciliation as part of the largest class action in Canadian history, sought after by Indian Residential School survivors against governments and churches who operated the schools. In 2015, the Working Group of the Commission came out with 94 Calls to Action that address all levels of government across all sectors of service in aims of advancing the process of reconciliation. In 2016, Canada also adopted the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which works in parallel with

the Calls to Action. These calls are meant to be a starting point and a minimum standard that the government and service providers should be meeting to be an equitable and just country to all people of all ethnicities.

## Process

Under the principle of “nothing about us, without us,” this action plan was co-created in collaboration with the HQC board of directors, leadership and the Cultural Advisory Committee. The Cultural Advisory Committee is a group of 10 First Nations and Métis individuals who bring their lived experience and the voices of Indigenous People into achieving HQC’s two strategic priorities of *enhancing the health and well-being of First Nations and Métis Peoples* and *social determinants of health with special focus on child and youth mental health and wellness*. This committee has been instrumental in helping HQC to do its work with First Nations and Métis people in a good way.

## Action Plan

Prior to the development of this reconciliation action plan, HQC started working towards becoming a culturally responsive organization. HQC adopted a framework from British Columbia in 2018, however, due to the pandemic, the hard work did not start until 2020. HQC looked to community to find Cultural Advisors who could guide the beginning of this journey. The activities that have happened as part of the Culturally Responsive Framework, that also align with reconciliation work, are:

- Education for staff on the history of Métis in Canada, Indigenous data sovereignty, and allyship
- Filling the position of the First Nations and Métis health lead
- Recruitment of the Cultural Advisors from across the province to form the committee
- Co-development of anti-racism policy with Advisors
- Co-development of a policy on verifying Indigenous identity with Advisors
- Reviewed and revised the bereavement leave policy with Advisors
- Co-design a one-page communication material to better serve Indigenous partners
- Reviewed and revised First Nations and Métis Knowledge Keeper/Elder Engagement Guide
- Developed and implemented an action framework for the HQC board of directors
- Had a guest speaker from National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation present to the HQC board of directors

The reconciliation action plan is a living document that is intended to grow and change in response to each step HQC takes towards reconciliation. HQC is committed to aligning with and fulfilling the Calls to Action that fit within the mandate of the organization over the coming years. The Calls to Action that closely align with HQC’s mandate are calls 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 43, 55, 57 and 80. HQC recognizes that all the Calls to Action are important but are choosing to act in the areas that align most with HQC’s current strategy and work. From April 2022 to March 2023, the themes of *effective and respectful relationships*, *increasing education and awareness*, *strengthening data and measurement*, and *addressing racism* are the areas identified for immediate action.

*Theme 1 - Effective and Respectful Relationships*

Establishing effective and respectful relationships is fundamental to reconciliation efforts and the overall prosperity of First Nations and Métis People. As treaty people, it is our collective responsibility to establish and maintain respectful relationships with one another. Relationships are built on trust, honesty, humility, and respect for each other including bridging in knowledge, culture, language, values, and beliefs. It is important to remain open-minded and flexible in timelines, communicate effectively, and not to push your priorities. Indigenous relationship-building allows for more impactful community development and provides opportunities to address social and economic barriers facing communities in a more collaborative way.

Calls to Action	Actions	Timeline	Responsibility
18, 23, and 57	Understanding and following proper protocol with each nation or organization that HQC partners with	Ongoing	All staff working in this space
18 and 80	Honouring days of importance for Indigenous Peoples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Indigenous History Month</li> <li>• National Indigenous Peoples’ Day</li> <li>• National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a statutory holiday</li> <li>• National Awareness Day for Missing and</li> </ul>	Ongoing	CEO, leadership, First Nations and Métis health lead

	<p>Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Louis Riel Day</li> <li>• Métis Culture Days</li> <li>• Batoche Days</li> </ul>		
18, 20, 22, 23 and 57	Create an Indigenous Advisory Committee to consult, inform, and advise HQC on the direction of the work	Complete	First Nations and Métis health lead
18 and 57	Meet with Indigenous governments/communities to co-develop plan, scope, content, and implementation of each project we work on together.	Ongoing	All staff working in this space
18, 19 and 57	Engaging communities and nations to understand how HQC can support their needs and priorities – exploring different approaches.	Ongoing	All staff working in this space
18 and 57	Honouring and respecting First Nations and Métis Peoples time and knowledge by providing remuneration outlined in HQC 's honorarium policy	Complete	All staff working in this space



## Theme 2 - Increase Education and Awareness

Increased understanding of histories and colonial practices will help build positive relationships with Indigenous people and support their goals to reclaim self-determination. Knowing the truth about Canada's history and how it impacts Indigenous Peoples to this day is paramount to moving forward with reconciliation. This understanding will allow HQC to provide more culturally appropriate and safe environments and services for all staff and clients.

Calls to Action	Actions	Timeline	Responsibility
18 and 57	Quality Improvement (QI) Power Hour- Indigenous speakers on various topics	1 to 2 times each year	Manager of learning programs
18 and 57	Staff learning series on various Indigenous topics related to history, current state, achievements, politics etc.	Quarterly	First Nations and Métis health lead
18, 23, and 57	Cultural humility training for all staff- colonization, racism, inequities, respect and understanding	Once per hire	CEO and human resources
18, 23, and 57	Bring more Indigenous practices, protocols, and ways of knowing in the workplace and services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning session on protocol</li> <li>• Cree words of the day</li> <li>• Indigenous Insights at huddles</li> </ul>	Ongoing	First Nations and Métis health lead, all staff
18, 23, and 57	Attend and sponsor Indigenous cultural events	Ongoing	CEO
18 and 57	Apply trauma-informed and equity lens on work where possible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying an equity lens to all the projects</li> <li>• Learning about trauma-informed thinking</li> </ul>	Ongoing	CEO, leadership, all staff

18, 23, 43, and 57	Incorporate opportunities for HQC board of directors to learn in different ways, engage in cultural events and develop a deeper understanding of reconciliation as a standing agenda item at quarterly meetings	Ongoing	Board of directors, CEO, First Nations and Métis health lead
18, 43, and 57	List of current resources related to Indigenous Peoples and health such as UNDRIP, TRC, MMIWG, podcasts, books, documentaries, films, etc.	September 2022	First Nations and Métis health lead

*Theme 3 - Strengthen Data and Measurement*

Indigenous Peoples have a history of being over-researched in a very dishonest and dehumanizing way, which has created many of the stereotypes and prejudices they face today. Due to laws like the Indian Act that don't allow for self-determination, the principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP®) may not be upheld at the nation level allowing the federal government to decide who uses the data. The colonial way is to present data in terms of deficits, when in fact there are many strengths that could be highlighted about Indigenous People. However, Indigenous People do not control their own narrative as their nation's priorities and needs are rarely discussed with researchers or service providers. To improve health and wellness outcomes for First Nations and Métis, it is crucial to collaborate early on to understand what their needs and priorities are and support them in successfully achieving their goals.

Calls to Action	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
19, 20 and 43	Creating space for cross government coordination of different sectors of health and social services to have a shared understanding of First Nations and Métis issues and to work towards a shared goal	Ongoing	Board, CEO and leadership
19 and 55	Implement learnings from OCAP® training: Co-create research agreements that uphold the principles of OCAP® and HQC	Ongoing	CEO, leadership, researchers, data experts, First Nations and Métis health lead

	obligations under data sharing agreements where possible.		
19 and 55	Support nations in their journey to own, control, access, and possess their data by building data literacy and analytic capability	Ongoing	CEO, leadership, researchers, data experts

*Theme 4 - Addressing Racism*

Due to the legacy of colonization, racism is something often felt by Indigenous People in Canada. Cultural safety is something that all people should experience in the workplace and in society. Providing appropriate knowledge, skills, and tools to actively speak up when witnessing racism in and out of the workplace will create safer and healthier environments to work and play.

Calls to Action	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
18 and 23	Review and revise HQC policies with an equity and reconciliation lens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two policies this year</li> </ul>	March 2023	CEO, human resources, First Nations and Métis health lead, Cultural Advisory Committee
18 and 23	Co-develop an anti-racism policy	Complete	First Nations and Métis health lead, human resources, Cultural Advisory Committee, CEO
18 and 23	Implement annual anti-racism training	October 2022	Human resources, First Nations and Métis health lead, CEO
18 and 23	Develop a confidential and safe way to report incidents of racism	October 2022	CEO and human resources

Accountability and Reporting

HQC is committed to achieving these actions and will be held accountable through on-going evaluation mechanisms throughout the year. These mechanisms include feedback from the staff and the Cultural Advisory Committee, as well as transparency to the public on HQC’s public platforms. A blog series will be used to inform stakeholders and the public on the progress of the Reconciliation Action Plan. HQC will internally track the completion of the actions which will be reported in a HQC’s annual report.

Additionally, future action plans will summarize all the completed and on-going actions from previous years. Reconciliation is a long journey which will evolve and grow in the years to come so no one year plan will look the same.