

Media Backgrounder: *Path to Prevention—Recommendations for Reducing Chronic Disease in First Nations, Inuit and Métis*

About the report

[*Path to Prevention - Recommendations for Reducing Chronic Disease in First Nations, Inuit and Métis*](#) is a report produced by the Aboriginal Cancer Control Unit at Cancer Care Ontario.

It provides evidence-based recommendations for the Government of Ontario to improve chronic disease prevention efforts in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. It is also a key deliverable of Cancer Care Ontario's third [Aboriginal Cancer Strategy](#).

This report serves as a companion to the 2012 publication entitled, *Taking Action to Prevent Chronic Disease: Recommendations for a Healthier Ontario (Taking Action)*. *Taking Action* was developed jointly by Public Health Ontario and Cancer Care Ontario, and provides 22 recommended policies and interventions to reduce population-level exposure to four key risk factors, build capacity for chronic disease prevention and work towards health equity.

A higher burden of chronic disease

Chronic disease has an enormous impact on First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Ontario. Incidence rates of chronic conditions are significantly higher in First Nations, Inuit and Métis populations than in the general Ontario population, and mortality rates are far greater for those affected by a chronic disease.

However, the adoption of healthy lifestyles has been shown to reduce the incidence of cancer by at least one-third, and decrease the incidence of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease by 80 per cent.

Research shows that behavioural health promotion strategies are not effective on their own and that health behaviour is influenced by social, economic and cultural settings. This reinforces the importance of creating supportive environments that encourage First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals, families and communities to make healthier choices.

Key recommendations from the report

- **Commercial tobacco use**
 - Develop and implement a coordinated plan to prevent commercial tobacco use among First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth;
 - Establish commercial tobacco cessation programs and services in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities;
 - Support the development of resources to address second- and third-hand smoke; and
 - Support community-initiated and managed tobacco control measures while respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis rights.
- **Alcohol consumption**
 - Ensure that culturally acceptable and relevant alcohol prevention and treatment programs for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people are available;
 - Broaden the impact of alcohol intervention strategies; and

- Incorporate alcohol interventions into existing tobacco control initiatives.
- **Physical activity**
 - Work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to create safe places for physical activity
 - Develop a strategy to promote equity in physical activity infrastructure for First Nations, Inuit and Métis
 - Address the socio-economic barriers to physical activity for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people; and
 - Build and disseminate a knowledge base around physical activity interventions in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities.
- **Healthy eating**
 - Develop an Indigenous food and nutrition strategy;
 - Reduce barriers that prevent access to healthy foods for First Nations, Inuit and Métis;
 - Address environmental issues for Indigenous foods; and
 - Develop traditional food and nutrition skills.
- **Equity**
 - Develop a plan to address First Nations, Inuit and Métis health equity;
 - Implement the plan to achieve First Nations, Inuit and Métis health equity goals;
 - Implement a plan to achieve equity in access to primary care; and
 - Build First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultural competency and safety within government.
- **Collaboration**
 - Support an integrated, cross-sectoral and whole-of-government approach to chronic disease prevention;
 - Promote a coordinated approach to the delivery of First Nations, Inuit and Métis health promotion programming in communities; and
 - Establish a coordinated system for surveillance, research, measurement and evaluation.

Moving forward together as a system

Cancer Care Ontario is committed to advancing the recommendations in this report, recognizing that implementation will require full participation by First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners and collaboration with a range of organizations.

An important first step is the creation of a collaborative structure that includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and other key partners to develop, plan, implement and evaluate progress.

A full copy of the report is available at cancercare.on.ca/pathtoprevention.

To read more about the third Aboriginal Cancer Strategy and the work Cancer Care Ontario is doing to improve health equity for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, please click [here](#).

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