



HEALTH EQUITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

SickKids[®] | 2030

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

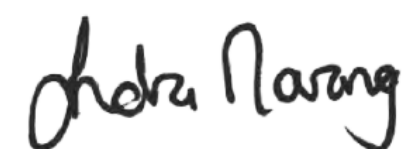


Dr. Ronald Cohn
President and CEO

In alignment with SickKids 2030, we are proud to share the Health Equity and Inclusion Strategy. This supporting strategy articulates a vision for a more equitable and just SickKids – for the children, youth and families we serve, and for the people who power our mission. Developed through 780+ engagements with our partners, the strategy centres equity as a central ingredient to health-care excellence – so that every child and youth, regardless of background or circumstance, has a real and fair opportunity to achieve their full health potential.

Our five-year strategy is anchored by three strategic directions:

- Advancing **Health Equity** through bolstered data collection and tailored supports that take action on the social determinants of health at the point of care
- Building culturally safe spaces, practices, and patient and family experiences to strengthen **Indigenous Health**
- Elevating **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** in organizational culture and systems



Dr. Indra Narang
VP, Health Equity and Inclusion

The Health Equity and Inclusion Strategy is about more than closing gaps – it is about transforming systems. We know inequities exist across our health system, ultimately influencing patient experiences and outcomes. This strategy positions us to anticipate, address, and prevent inequities proactively.

We will harness **clinical expertise, research and data, lived experience, and community insights** to understand what people need, where gaps exist, and how we can respond with solutions that are just, sustainable, and deeply human.

The Health Equity and Inclusion Strategy is also about **our culture** – building a workplace where ideas flow, voices are valued, and everyone feels they belong. Equitable care begins here, with teams that **reflect, respect, and champion the communities we serve**.

The strategy belongs to all of us – and is ours to grow. Join us as we break down barriers, transform care, and create a health system where every child and youth has the opportunity to thrive.



EVOLVING OUR MISSION

SickKids remains firmly committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. The formation of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Office in 2021, and the inaugural 2022-2025 EDI Strategy, advanced meaningful progress across the organization.

In 2025, recognizing the evolving and complex needs of patients and families, the EDI Office expanded its focus and became the Office of Health Equity and Inclusion (OHEI). With this shift, our work to champion EDI across the organization continued, while also broadening the mission to include a deeper focus on Indigenous Health, and meaningful action on the social determinants of health at the point of care.

We believe health equity and inclusion is everyone's responsibility. Through our collaborative approach to change, SickKids is working to embed health equity and inclusion across the organization.

OHEI's role is to help bring EDI, Health Equity, and Indigenous Health to life across SickKids.

THE URGENCY OF OUR MISSION

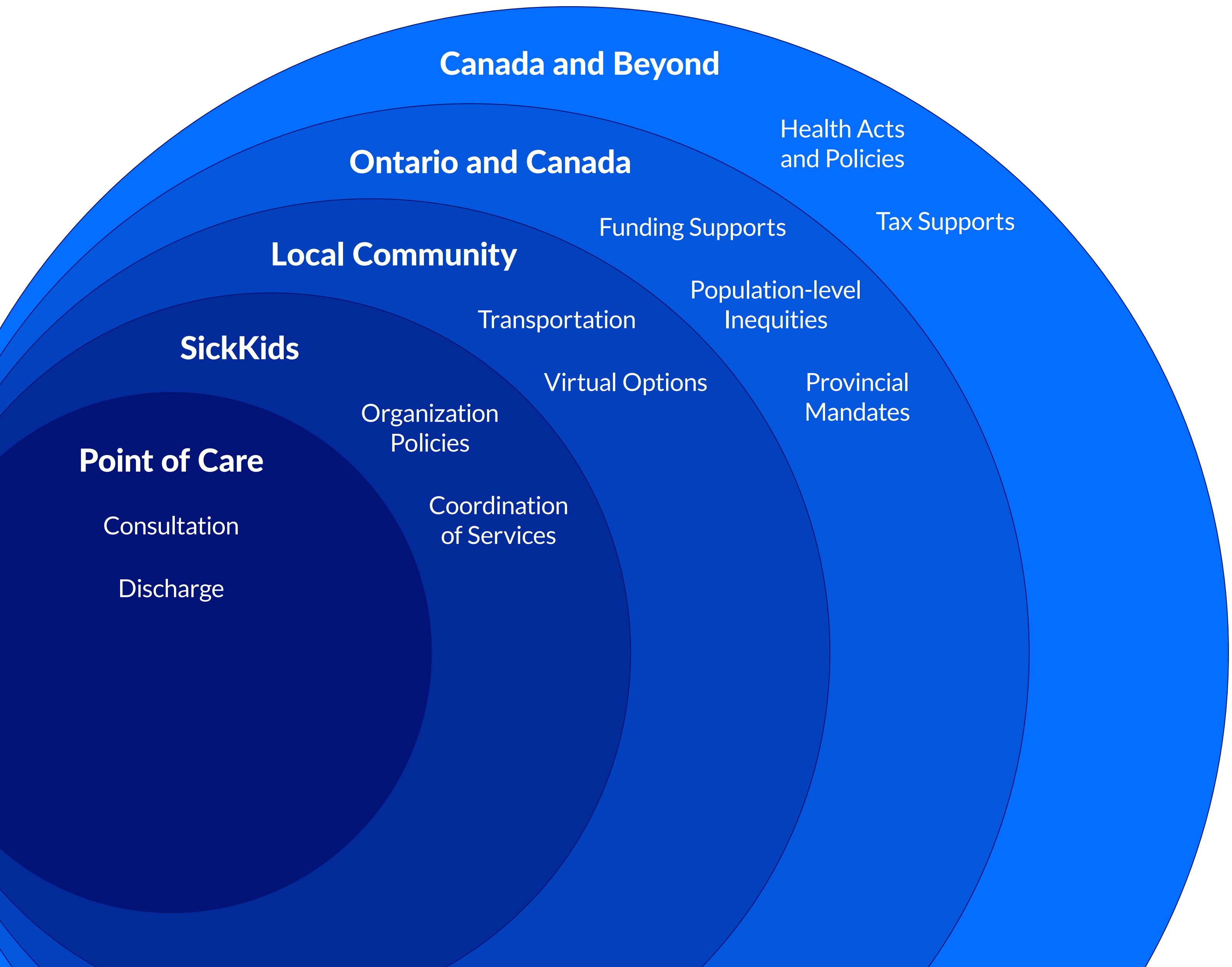
Research tells us that up to 80 per cent of health outcomes are influenced by the social determinants of health. Because of this, health inequities continue to worsen for many of the most disadvantaged children and youth we serve.

SickKids believes urgent attention **and action** is needed to address the social determinants of health, and to reverse many of the avoidable health burdens our communities face.

Today, at the centre of our mission is a determination to transform the experience of equity-owed communities for the better, with a focus on Indigenous patients and families feeling culturally safe and valued.

Alignment to SickKids 2030

The Health Equity and Inclusion Strategy advances SickKids' Precision Child Health movement as well as the SickKids 2030 Strategy. We do this through learning patients' and families' unique identities – from genetic code to postal code – and incorporating equity into care, providing culturally safe care for Indigenous patients, and fostering a diverse workforce where everyone feels a sense of belonging and inclusion.



AREAS OF IMPACT

There are multiple layers of opportunity to advance health equity, equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and Indigenous health, from the point of care, to SickKids-wide, to within the community and beyond.

The Health Equity and Inclusion Strategy prioritizes work in our most immediate locus of control – here at SickKids – as we consolidate organizational focus to set the foundation for sustainable, long-term change.

We will keep engaging in work at the community level to advance systemic change.

HOW WE GOT HERE



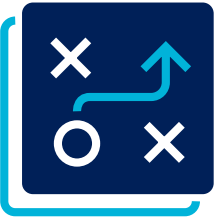
552

Survey responses from workforce members



198

Survey responses and feedback from patients and caregivers



30+

Collaborative planning sessions with our partners



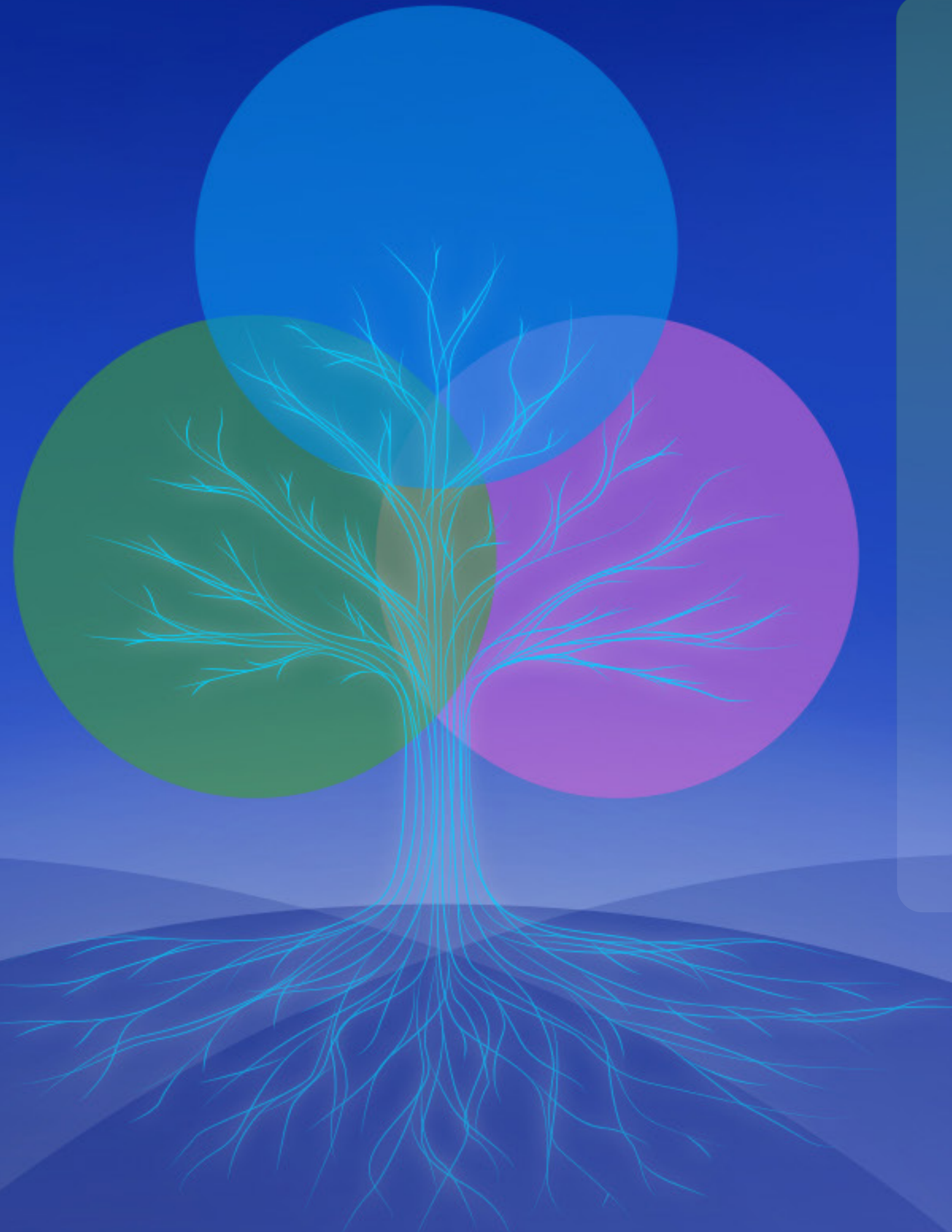
Environmental Scans

Internal EDI, Health Equity, and Indigenous Health work, Indigenous health programs and strategies, EDI and health equity work across Ontario and Canadian paediatric hospitals



Literature Reviews

Collection, analysis and use of social determinants of health data



Health Equity

Increasing equitable access to and delivery of care at SickKids so every child and youth we see can reach their full health potential.

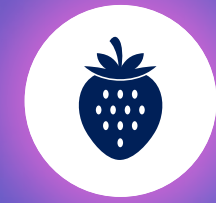
- Understand the unique identities of patients
- Increase equitable access and delivery of care
- Foster health equity capacity-building



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Fostering diversity, inclusion and belonging for every staff member.

- Champion EDI in organizational systems
- Support a culture of belonging and inclusion
- Strengthen EDI education and training



Indigenous Health

Supporting culturally safe care for Indigenous patients and families and amplifying Indigenous voices across SickKids.

- Enhance cultural safety education
- Amplify cultural support and spaces
- Build reciprocal partnerships

As leaders in child health, we partner locally and globally to improve the health of children through the integration of care, research and education.

Compassion

Integrity

Collaboration

Inclusion

Innovation

Excellence

HEALTH EQUITY

Our objectives:

- Understand the unique identities of patients
- Increase equitable access and delivery of care
- Foster health equity capacity-building

How can we deliver equitable care to each unique child and youth at SickKids?

We understand that health equity is rooted in understanding the unique identities and social circumstances of each patient – from genetic code to postal code. Through the Health Equity Data Initiative, we are deepening our understanding of each patient’s unique background, including their race, language, gender, access to transportation, and more.

By equipping staff to use this information in care delivery and improvement initiatives, we will ensure that every

child and youth who visits SickKids is able to access inclusive and equitable care. We will weave equity into our everyday practices, leverage organizational and digital tools, and advance data-driven improvement.

To sustain health equity initiatives and expand innovation, we will build capacity for our workforce to deepen skills from knowledge generation to application.



SickKids uses the oak tree as a symbol of health equity – rooted in the Health Equity Data Initiative (HEDI), strengthened with collaboration, and expanding with continuous growth.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Our objectives:

- Champion EDI in organizational systems
- Support a culture of belonging and inclusion
- Strengthen EDI education and training

How will our staff, learners and volunteers be reflected in this strategy?

This strategy builds the progress made since the inaugural EDI Strategy was established in 2022, with a renewed focus on supporting staff, learners, and volunteers by fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace and learning environment – critical to collaboration and trust, and ultimately to better outcomes for children, youth, and families.

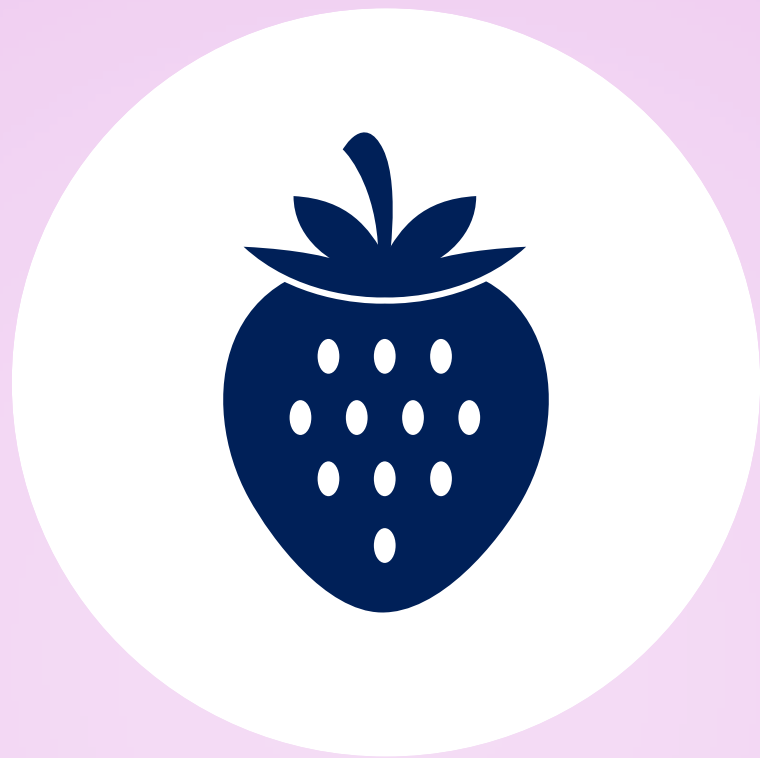
This area focuses on creating a culture of belonging where everyone feels supported and able to contribute fully and

authentically. By strengthening our understanding of diverse populations, we serve equity and continue to embed equity into organizational systems and practices, aim to remove barriers and support people to thrive.

Building our EDI education resources to emphasize sustained application and accountability will ensure EDI principles are consistently reflected in how we lead, learn, and work together.



Representing EDI, the watering can symbolizes staff who nourish our mission, with every droplet fostering deeper connections and continued growth.



Indigenous Health at SickKids is rooted in the guiding principles symbolized by the strawberry plant – reflecting growth, interconnectedness and care – that nourish and sustain the work of the Indigenous Health Program.

INDIGENOUS HEALTH

Our objectives:

- Enhance cultural safety education
- Amplify cultural support and spaces
- Build reciprocal partnerships

How will we embed Indigenous Health across SickKids?

We are building the foundation for a sustainable Indigenous Health Program, grounded in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action related to health care (#18–24).

Recognizing the diverse learning needs across the enterprise, cultural safety education will be rolled out in multiple learning formats to be accessible by all SickKids staff.

By sharing widely about the cultural support and spaces offered to Indigenous patients, families and staff, we support an inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

Building our partnerships internally and externally will be essential in creating a strong foundation grounded in community.

INDIGENOUS HEALTH GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The strawberry plant symbolizes the program's guiding principles, reflecting growth, interconnectedness and care. Each element represents a foundational value:

Relationships: Our roots are anchored by cultivating meaningful, reciprocal partnerships grounded in trust and collaboration.

Responsibility: Our base for stability, upheld through accountability and transparency in our relationships with Indigenous patients, families, and communities.

Continuous Learning: Like ever-growing stems, we hold a commitment to ongoing education on Indigenous histories, knowledges and health needs.

Holistic Care: The leaves of the strawberry plant wrap and protect the berries, reflecting our approach to care that supports physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Respect: As a signal for growth and potential, the flower reminds us to honour Indigenous cultural protocols, knowledge systems and diverse perspectives.

Self-Determination: Like the heart berry – the fruit of the plant – we empower Indigenous peoples to guide decisions about their health and well-being.

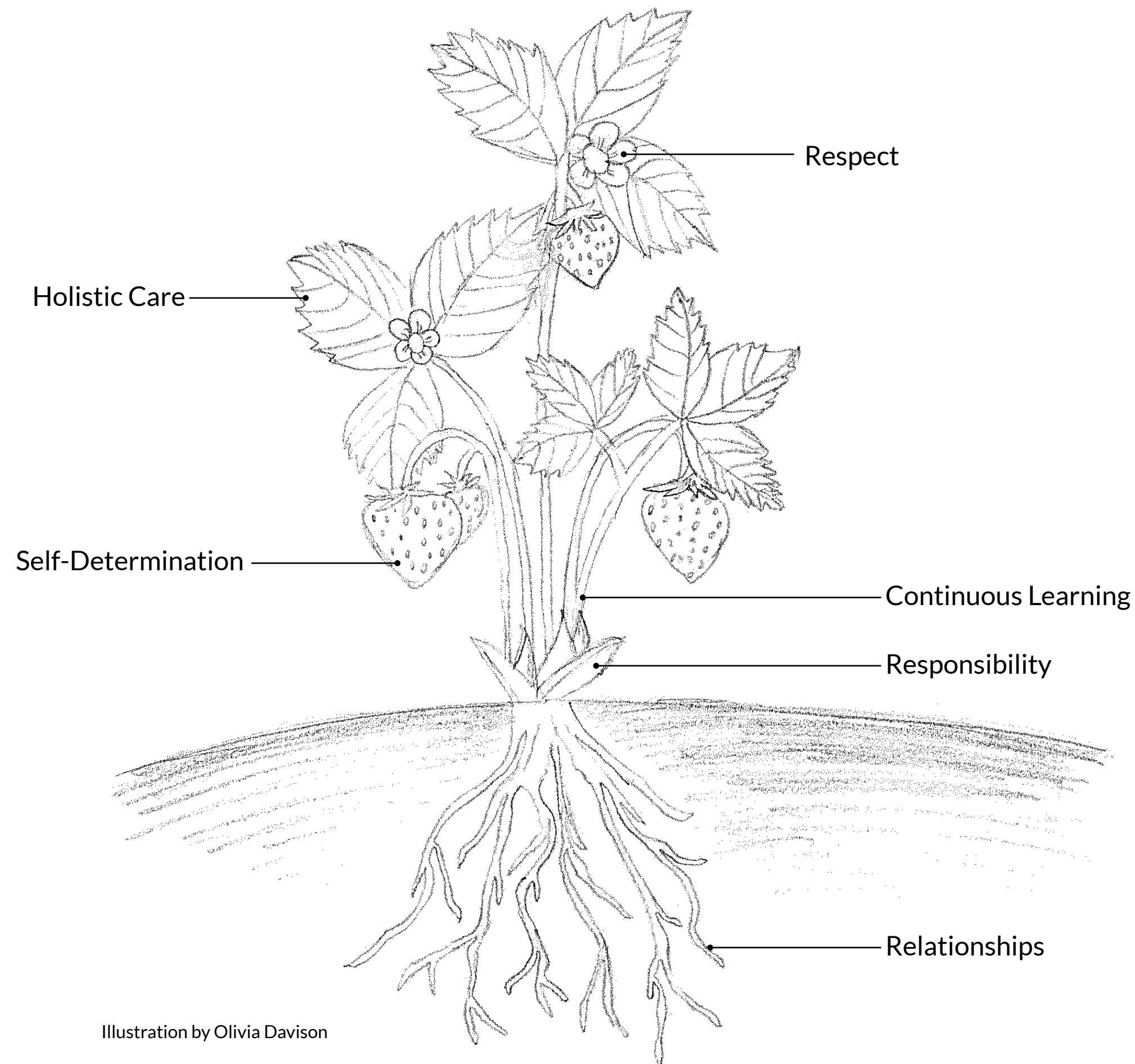


Illustration by Olivia Davison

Together, these principles guide the Indigenous Health Program in fostering culturally safe, responsive and equitable care for Indigenous patients and families.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE IN 2030?



HEALTH EQUITY



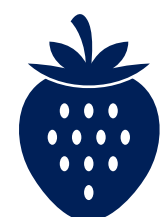
- Unique identities and social circumstances of each patient are understood and recognized.
- Personalized care is provided by embedding equity into care delivery and improvement initiatives, and by leveraging organizational and digital tools.
- Emerging health equity leadership builds capacity and fosters innovation.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



- Sustainable staff demographic collection in place and moving towards a 90 per cent completion rate.
- Staff, learners and volunteers feel recognized, included and valued for their whole selves and feel welcomed to engage with all members of the community.
- EDI educational opportunities across clinical, learner and research spaces adopted broadly.



INDIGENOUS HEALTH



- Sustainable Indigenous Health Program meaningfully advances the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action through culturally safe care, education and practice.
- Accessible and varied learning opportunities to build cultural safety, with Indigenous patients, families, and staff feeling welcomed and supported.
- Strong internal and external partnerships anchor this work in the community and ensure it is lasting and responsive.

DEFINITIONS

Health Equity

Health equity is achieved when every child, youth and family has a fair opportunity to achieve their full potential for health and well-being, how they want, when they want. This means ensuring that the people most disadvantaged by the health system have improved access to care, and the supports they need, to achieve the best outcomes possible.

Health Equity Data Initiative (HEDI)

HEDI surveys ask patients and caregivers about their identities and social determinants of health. This information will be used to advance equitable and inclusive care for each unique patient. As more HEDI information is collected, it will inform service planning, quality of care, and more.

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

Non-medical factors that impact the health of a person that are related to income, physical and social environment, employment, and more.

Intersectionality

A way of understanding how a person's overlapping identities – such as race and sex – combine to shape a person's opportunities and life experience.

Indigenous

A term referring to the original inhabitants of a territory. In Canada, this refers to the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

Cultural Safety

An outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the health-care system. It is the outcome of people feeling safe and free of discrimination when receiving health-care services.

Cultural Humility

A life-long process of reflection to understand individual and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust.

Indigenous Place-making

The restoration of an Indigenous presence within the natural or built environment that embodies and holds space for Indigenous cultures and traditions.

Workforce equity, diversity and inclusion

This exists when a person feels accepted and valued in their workplace, and benefits from fair opportunities to participate and grow.

Equity-owed communities

A term that describes groups of people who have been historically and systemically disadvantaged, sometimes even harmed, because of who they are. Similar terms are used to express the same meaning, like “equity-deserving” or “equity-seeking” communities.