

A letter from the executive director, Pam Nolan

Digital health has become the foundation upon which most healthcare is planned, delivered, and coordinated in Canada today. Hospitals, Public Health, primary care teams, home care teams, specialists and other care providers rely daily on electronic medical records, provincial health data repositories, eReferral tools, virtual care systems and an increasing number of specialized health data apps to share information and support clinical decision making. Modern digital health tools are designed to interoperate, share information across a client's care team, and support a client's care needs while also, hopefully, creating efficiencies that will assist increasing demand for health care services. There are countless regional, provincial, and national strategies and initiatives to increase awareness, adoption, and use of modern, integrated, digital health tools. However, and unfortunately, most of this trend towards embracing digital health has not considered how First Nation health teams can and should be supported to take advantage of these powerful and increasingly ubiquitous tools. Myself, the team at First Nations Digital Health Ontario (FNDHO), and our funding partners are working steadily to fix this oversight and ensure that the many First Nation health teams in Ontario are not left behind and outside of the increasingly connected and digitized provincial health system.

FNDHO has worked with communities across Ontario to help them identify what their digital health needs are – to look at what they wished they could do that they weren't doing currently. For some, it was as straightforward as getting off paper-based charting processes. Others wanted to beef-up their privacy and security policies and wanted support to train staff. And others wanted to share client information with hospitals and to have information shared back as true care partners – to be alerted when a community member was discharged from hospital. And most everybody has been interested in how they can leverage virtual care. As I reflect on this past year of work, there are a few projects that I am excited to share because of the real impact they are making in improving health care for community members.

This annual report shares some of these projects. There's been a lot of work done, a lot of tough discussions and negotiations with provincial and federal partners in our push for digital health equity, and we've made progress – both in terms of real impact at a First Nation health team level, and also in setting new precedents and models for collaboration and cooperation with provincial Circle of Care partners. And none of this work would have been possible without the time, effort and willingness of many First Nation health teams who worked with us. A big thank you to all of you for helping us on this journey.

As you read through this annual report, I hope you'll enjoy the stories about journey mapping, The Privacy & Security Challenge, our virtual care initiative, and our progress on creating pathways for access to provincial systems and information that can improve the care coordination our community members deserve. There are other stories too, but an annual report can only be so long, so I invite you to please contact me whenever you like if you're interested in hearing more, or if you're interested in FNDHO's support.

Sincerely,

Pam Nolan

Executive Director, FNDHO

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A letter from the board chair, Kimberly Lalonde

The number of requests we receive each year from community health teams, Tribal Councils, and health authorities continues to grow. And from the launch of the Virtual Care Access & Literacy Program, to the privacy and security training sessions we hosted in-person in three communities, to enabling more First Nation health teams to gain access to ConnectingON ClinicalViewer – we're happy to report many examples of how FNDHO has supported First Nation health teams across Ontario to get the answers they need to improve care coordination for their community members.

And it is these resilient health teams that continue to motivate our work. They are the true experts in what is required to provide client-centric care to their members. FNDHO is proud to be a digital health resource and partner in supporting their day-to-day work.

Thank you to the FNDHO team for their enthusiasm and creativity in delivering new solutions to meet the current technology and adoption challenges First Nation communities face. And thank you to our government partners who are also determined to deliver new approaches that will close the digital health system gaps that First Nation health teams experience.

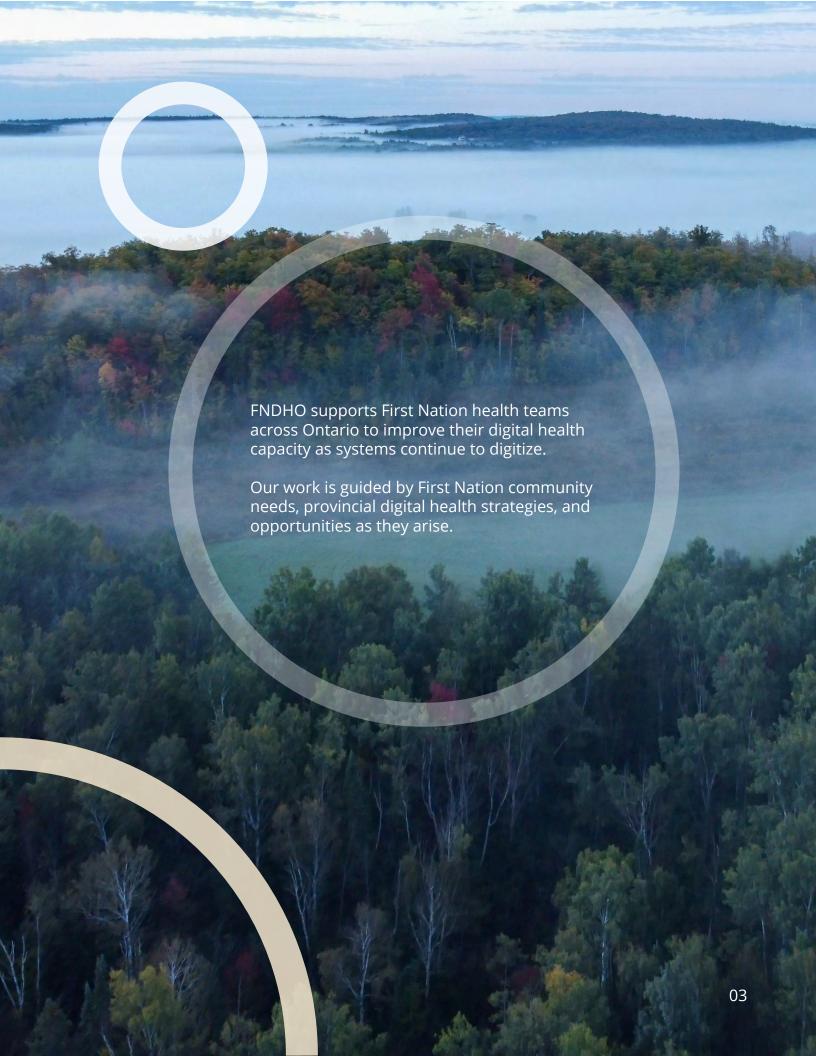
Digital health is an absolute requirement for effective, efficient and integrated client-centric care, and the positive feedback we're receiving from First Nation health teams shows us the ongoing need of providing this digital health transformation support.

As you read through this report you will learn highlights about the work that is being done to prevent First Nation health teams from being left behind their provincial counterparts. I encourage you to visit our website to learn more about these projects, and to get in touch with us directly to learn in more detail how we help First Nation health teams to work within the digital health systems and environment.

Sincerely,

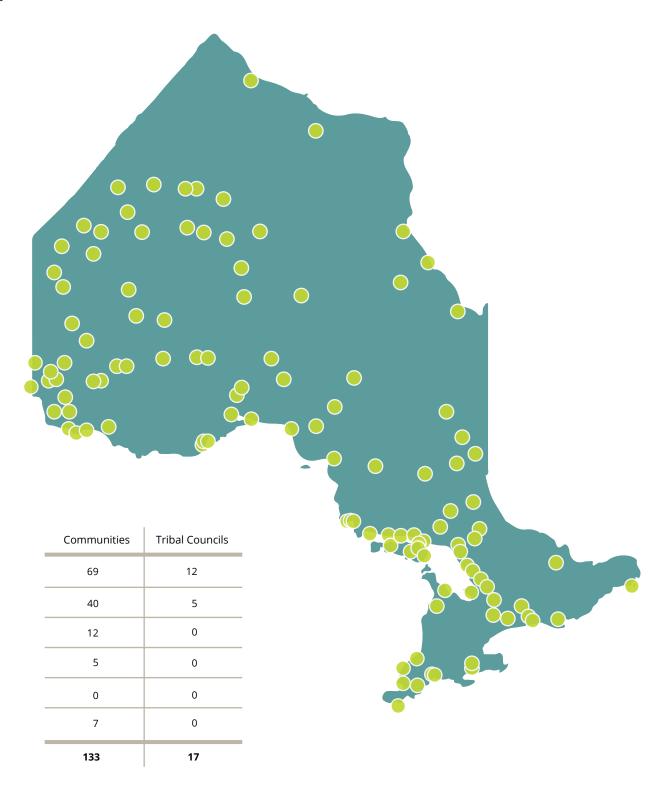
Kimberly LalondeBoard Chair, FNDHO

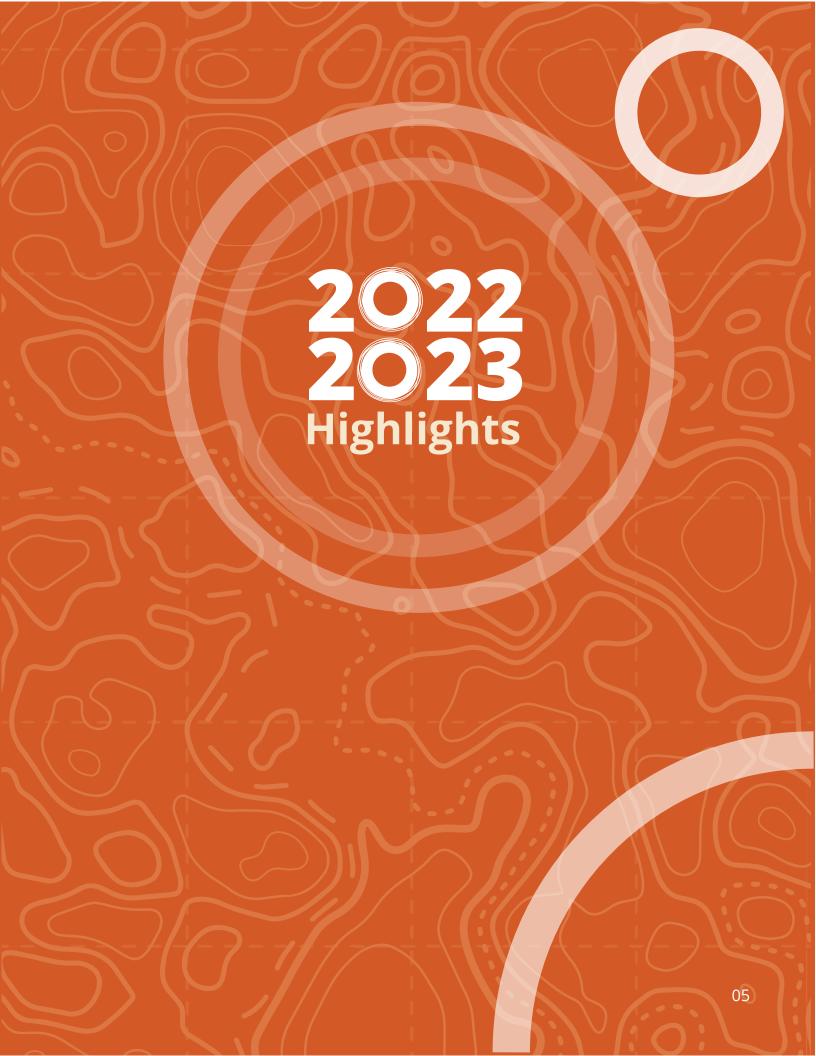
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We Support First Nation Health **Teams Across Ontario**

FNDHO is mandated by Chiefs of Ontario Resolution 49/18 to provide digital health services to First Nations across Ontario.





Digital Health Training and Education

Over 200 participants from First Nations across the province took part in customized, in-person, virtual and online training sessions to develop skills in digital health best practices, privacy and security, and health information management.

I didn't know FNDHO existed until they reached out to introduce themselves. I've met with different people who've taught me about different aspects of digital health. I'm the type of person who likes to learn by visualizing things, and FNDHO was helpful in mapping things out which was really great because I could then visualize the gaps. And now I understand the growing importance of digital services and what we need in our community, and I feel more empowered about how we can actually utilize digital services in our area.

Donna Corston, Associate Health Director, Moose Cree First Nation

Access to Provincial eHealth Systems

Working with Ontario Health, FNDHO successfully created a process to enable First Nation health teams to access tools that share client information. This new model supported 8 health teams to gain access to provincial eHealth systems.

Dilico Health has worked with FNDHO on a couple projects – both have been well coordinated and have been flexible to our timelines. The first project helped us enhance our technological and digital capacity for service delivery, while the second helped us onboard and launch the OCEAN e-referral system. We look forward to continued collaboration that will enhance the care needs of Indigenous clients and improve continuity of care.

200+
Digital health learners.



Health teams were supported to gain access to provincial eHealth systems.

Virtual Care **Access & Literacy**

This pilot program offered First Nation health teams free iPads pre-loaded with data plans, tutorials and apps. The iPads can be loaned to community members to support access to virtual health care.

This program has cut down the need for our clients to drive 90 km to the nearest hospital or do a 4-6 hour commute to see a specialist. We can now support clients from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

Virtual Care Access & Literacy program survey respondent

Privacy & Security Challenge

133 Privacy & Security Challenge Packages were sent to First Nation health teams across Ontario. These packages included fun activities that review and broaden privacy and security policies and programs, and encourage communication with clients about the importance of keeping health information confidential.

I'm happy to say that our staff have completed The Privacy and Security Challenge!! My manager liked it so much, it will now become part of our new staffing package. Thank you for giving us this resource which will now be used beyond The Challenge.

Julie Simcoe, Community Health Nurse, Chippewas of Rama First Nation



communities.



Privacy & Security Challenge Packages were sent to First Nation health teams across the province.



Home and Community Care Digital Health Expansion Initiative

For a third year, FNDHO has collaborated with First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care (FNIHCC) to deliver and manage a funding model to support digital health advancement for home and community care teams. Working one-on-one with the vital health needs of each organization, we supported teams with the implementation of new systems, while sustaining and enhancing existing ones.



As a health service provider in remote communities with rotating professional staff and little IT support within the communities or the tribal council, gaining ground with digital solutions is essential to providing a full scope of health services to community members, and also very challenging.

Through the support of FNDHO we were able to map out our documentation processes and work-flow and see where we could implement more efficient and safer practices in managing client information. We had a lot to learn about privacy and security of health information and benefitted by FNDHO providing in-person education to tighten up our policies. Thank you also for your hardware/software education and in assisting in preparing our Home and Community Care funding applications. It has been a pleasure including you on our Digital Health Team.

Patty Everson, R.N.

Home and Community Care Program, Windigo First Nations Council

Using Journey Maps to Improve Care Coordination

FNDHO used a 'journey mapping' methodology to describe, analyze and document the gaps and challenges community members and their health teams face while navigating through provincial health agencies and services (e.g. community to hospital and home again). This storytelling approach highlights the impacts on community members, their families and health care providers, and identifies opportunities for improvement.

The 'journey mapping' methodology creates highly visual maps, presentations and documents which can be used with provincial partners to improve care coordination, and can be shared with other First Nations across Ontario.



FNDHO guided collaborative efforts with our Six Nations Health and Social Services team, using evidence-based approaches that spurred action and fostered trust. Their impactful two-day workshop, which never lost sight of the patient, garnered life-changing feedback. The FNDHO team, knowledgeable and culturally attuned, built and maintained trust seamlessly. I love that we have maintained the belief that authentic relationships among partners are pivotal for keeping patients at the center of solution finding. This experience stood out from all other engagements we've had in the past to improve patient care and information sharing.

Richelle Miller, Indigenous Transitions Facilitator, Six Nations Health and Social Services





Our clinic delivers virtual care services to Indigenous individuals and their families through primary care community-based clinics in Chapleau and Wawa. Since FNDHO helped to connect us with OTN, the mental health and wellness worker's service with clients has improved. Being able to offer in-person care with virtual care tools has given clients more access to counseling that other-wise might not have been possible.

Irene Armstrong, Integrated Care Manager Maamwesying North Shore Community Health Services We would like to commend FNDHO for helping us find the exact program we were looking for to help support our program function. From our initial meeting, through to the end, you were very responsive and able to support all meetings and follow-up throughout the entire process. This program will benefit our clients in so many ways and advance the quality of care we are able to provide to them.

Chelsea Janveau, Interim Manager of Home and Community Care Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services

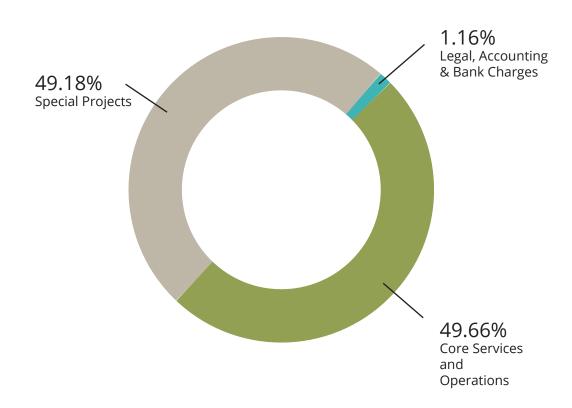


Financial Summary

Our numbers from 2022/2023



Funding Indigenous Services Canada, SE Health \$3,624,682



Our Expenses

Core Services and Operations \$1,800,000 Supporting the day-to-day activities of providing the digital health services that First Nations health

teams are requesting.

Special Projects \$1,782,767 Including these programs: Privacy and Security, Digital Health Lead, Virtual Care and Literacy, and Health 811.

Legal, Accounting & Bank Charges

\$41,915



Thank you to the resilient, motivated health teams working within First Nations communities, Tribal Councils, Health Authorities, Political Territorial Organizations, and Chiefs of Ontario who are willing to lead the way to make changes that improve health care integration and access for our community members.

Thank you to our funding partners – First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB Ontario Region), and First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care (FNIHCC) – who support and guide us.

And finally, thank you for your interest in reading this report to learn more about the current status of digital health for First Nations in Ontario.

Get in touch with us to learn more about our work and how we can help. Contact us at info@fndho.ca. www.fndho.ca

