FNDHO
First Nations Digital Health Ontario

2021/2022
ANNUAL REPORT

Advancing Digital Health Capacity for First Nations in Ontario.

Where care and community come together.

This is FNDHO's first official annual report as an incorporated, not-for-profit organization. However, FNDHO's journey has spanned many years. Starting initially with input from several First Nations Health Directors and First Nation Health organizations staff and with a focus on sharing the use of the provincial public health surveillance system, Panorama, the opportunities – and the challenges – for First Nations to adopt and use digital health tools grew quickly.

FNDHO is a non-political entity created as a result of Resolution 49/18 from All Ontario Chiefs in Assembly, and is guided by a committee of First Nation health leads across Ontario to address inequities in First Nations digital health.

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Message from FNDHO's Executive Director

Pam Nolan

On behalf of First Nations Digital Health Ontario, I am pleased to present the 2021/2022 Annual Report, our first ever. FNDHO as an incorporated organization has a short history, but myself and several of my colleagues came together more than a decade ago to combine our knowledge, interest and ideas in an effort to close the gap we were seeing as health directors and health leads, between what we (First Nations) had available to us with respect to digital health and what provincially funded teams had access to.

A year of growing and evolving

Over the years, our focus has remained on digital health and on advancing opportunities for First Nations to benefit from investments and developments in integrated, digitally-enabled circles of care. FNDHO has grown, evolved and matured, but our singular objective remains: supporting First Nations Health Teams across the province to benefit from digital health and not be left behind as health care models continue to become increasingly reliant on technology.

There's a lot of work to do. But we have a strong team that won't back down from a challenge. And we have strong partners and allies in the provincial and federal governments, and in many of the health care organizations within Ontario and across the country. We are also incredibly lucky to have so many interested and motivated Health Directors, managers and providers working within the First Nations communities, Tribal Councils, Health Authorities, PTO's, and Chiefs of Ontario who are willing to lead the way on the changes that can help improve health care integration and access for our community members. I feel very fortunate to be able to work with all of them.
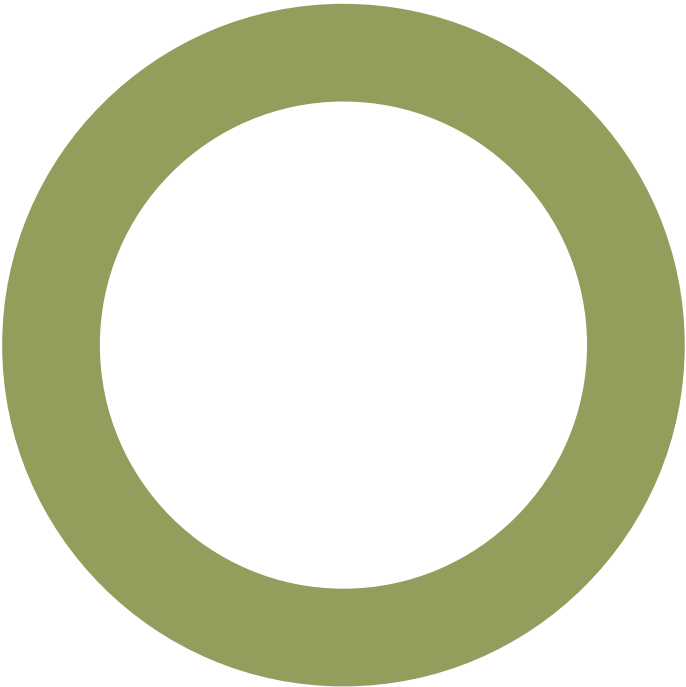
Message from FNDHO's Board Chair

Kimberly Lalonde

On behalf of the FNDHO Board, I am pleased to present FNDHO's first annual report. It has been a long journey to set up the first digital health-focused support organization for First Nations in Ontario, but it has been worth it. We started more than a decade ago as a small group of Health leads hoping to get access to one provincial eHealth system, and now we have what might be the only dedicated, First Nations-led digital health support and advocacy organization in the country.

Facilitating integrated, client-centered care

A lot of work by a lot of people went into establishing FNDHO as an incorporated, not-for-profit organization. But without the leadership, effort and patience of many of our communities' health care leaders, we wouldn't have gotten anywhere. They were the ones that helped FNDHO find digital health pathways, test and pilot digital health processes, and push on partners to acknowledge and integrate with our wellness needs. Through the dedication of our partners in communities across the province we have been able to clearly show the province and the federal government that digital health isn't a luxury for First Nations, it's an absolute necessity for integrated, client-centred care in Canada in the 21st century. It's FNDHO's goal to ensure none of our communities are left behind as the health care system continues to digitize around us.

It has been a privilege and an inspiration to work with the community health teams that have come forward with such amazing resilience and strength. In the face of this past year's hurt, trauma, loss, and devastation, we express our heartfelt thanks to our communities, health teams, partners and our community leaders for their contributions, guidance and advocacy.

FNDHO at a glance.

Vision and Philosophy

FNDHO is built on sharing, integrity, respect, community, culture, transparency, honesty and openness. Our vision is to be an innovative support centre for First Nations digital health transformation. Through knowledge sharing, capacity building, pathway creation and change management we support the design, implementation, enhancement and sustainment of digital health processes.

Commitments

· Community-level planning and system-level improvements.

· Recognition as equal health care partners.

· Access parity with the province of Ontario, decision support, and client safety.

· Information sharing to enhance client-centric care.

· Client involvement in their wellness journey.

· Electronic health tools, time savings, reporting support.

· Integration barriers removed, increased client confidence.

· Health information management priorities identified.

Capacity building

FNDHO supports awareness, knowledge building and comfort with digital health tools and processes for First Nations Health Teams serving communities across Ontario.

Transformation

We support First Nations and their partners in changing conventional models of healthcare, seeking culturally-relevant processes that resonate with First Nations teachings.

Navigation

We match health needs with available digital tools and technologies, creating pathways for better clinical workflow integration with circle-of-care partners.
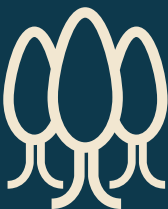
Advocacy

We work with First Nations to understand their objectives and priorities and advocate for change in the current, conventional health system in order to advance meaningful care models for community members.

Our Services

Home + Community Care Digital Health

Supporting HCC Teams to adopt and use digital health tools and processes.

Provincial eHealth System Access

Developing pathways for First Nations' Providers access to and use of Provincial eHealth Systems.

Virtual Care

Supporting the adoption and use of innovative Virtual Care models for First Nations Health Teams and their clients.

Circle-of-Care Coordination

Enhancing health information sharing through digital health tools and processes among all circle-of-care providers—ie, community-level providers, Tribal Councils, hospitals, provincial and federal agencies.

EMR/cEMR Adoption + Implementation

Supporting the adoption and implementation of electronic client record systems for First Nations Health Teams.

Information Management

Promoting best practices for health information management, including collection, storage, maintenance and sharing.

Ontario Health Teams participation

Ensuring the inclusion of First Nations in Ontario Health Teams responsible for delivering coordinated care within Ontario.

Privacy + Security Support

Supporting Privacy and Security policies, procedures, training, education, capacity – and CyberSecurity awareness – for First Nations Health Teams.

Training + Knowledge

Developing online courses for First Nations Health Teams to learn about privacy and security, best practices, processes and obligations.

Workflow Optimization

Exploration and analysis of existing health services workflows and the identification of digital health updates that can result in improved integration and client care.
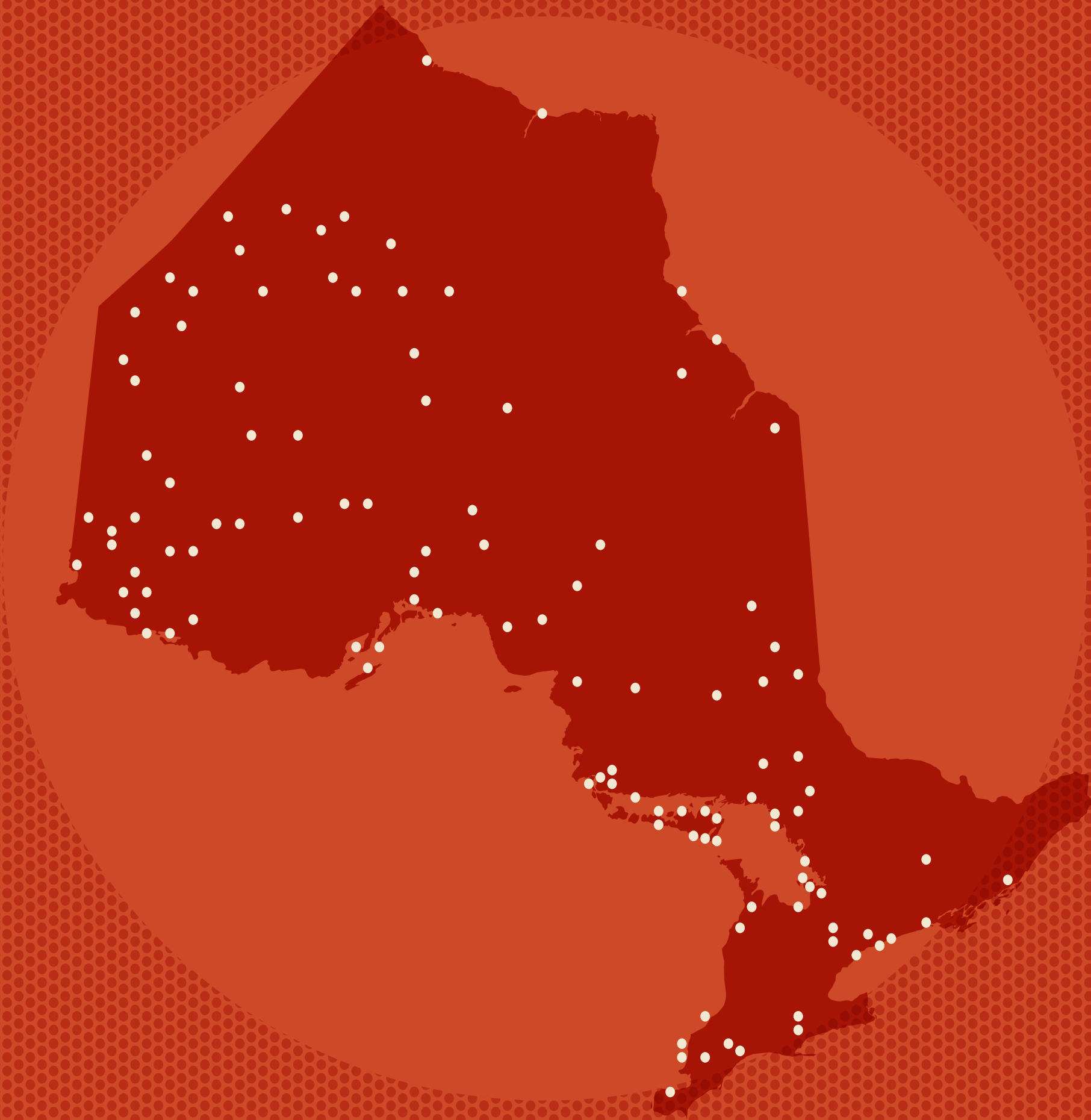
Our Focus is First Nations in Ontario.

Our services are available to all First Nations Health Teams across Ontario and are offered at no cost. Our region serves 133 Indigenous communities with plans to reach many more with digital tools in 2022 and beyond.

FNDHO Initiatives:
Highlights

The need to address digital health gaps for First Nations Health Teams has definitely been highlighted over the past few years. The COVID Pandemic quickly showed us the utility and benefit of digital health and virtual care tools, and also reminded us that many First Nations Health Teams were still wanting and needing support to transition from paper-based systems towards electronic tools and processes.

FNDHO exists to be responsive to First Nations digital health priorities, and the range of initiatives and activities we always have underway reflects these priorities. Some initiatives are short and targeted, others are longer and have the potential to bring benefit to many Health Teams. Regardless, FNDHO's approach is to follow the lead of the Health Teams we work with, meet them where they are at, and help them make the changes they need. Plus, with each of our initiatives, FNDHO aims to create repeatable models, tools and resources so that other Health Teams might also benefit when the time is right for them too.

The next few pages highlights a few of FNDHO's current initiatives.

Enabling virtual care

The COVID pandemic has definitely highlighted the need and the benefits of virtual care. FNDHO's virtual care initiatives vary across the First Nations Health Teams we work with but all seek to improve access to care for community members while enabling providers with the tools, knowledge and resources they need to support virtual care processes.

Putting patients first in more communities

FNDHO actively collaborates with Ontario Health to identify and advance opportunities for First Nations to participate in provincially-funded virtual care initiatives. We have supported multiple health teams to pilot new models of accessing and supporting care virtually.

We've also been preparing for the launch of a new Virtual Care and Learning (VCAL) Initiative with funding support from FNIHB Ontario Region eHealth. This new initiative will give First Nations in Ontario practical tools and support to explore how they can improve access to health services for their community members.

The last year has clearly demonstrated that virtual care is becoming a standard model for access to services, and FNDHO is actively working to ensure First Nations are positioned to adopt and benefit from virtual care opportunities.
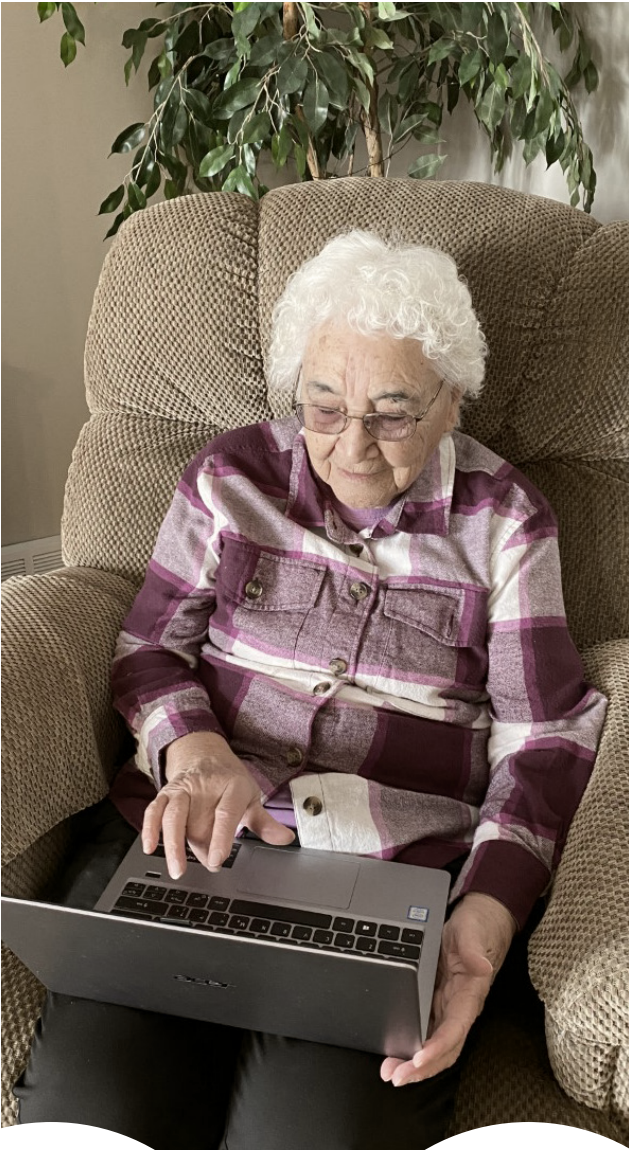
> Trust, familiarity and affordability with technology were barriers to overcome.

VIVIFY SOLUTIONS

VIVIFY SOLUTIONS APP
Allows remote monitoring of high-risk patients.

35+ COMMUNITIES

35+ communities expressed interest in virtual care solutions.

Ontario Telemedicine Network.

Delivers one-to-one care to the community.

Access to Provincial eHealth Systems

Years ago, when FNDHO was still forming, several First Nation Health Teams were already asking us if we could help them gain access to the range of provincial eHealth systems that clinical providers in provincial agencies have access to. In particular, clinical providers in First Nations Health Teams were looking to access community members' clinical information collected by provincial health teams so that they could better support care coordination and patient safety.

The majority of requests centred around access to the provincial Electronic Health Record Viewers (EHR summary), the Digital Health Immunization Repository (Immunization Status and Forecast), the Digital Health Drug Repository (Prescription Drug Profile), and Hospital Report Manager (Hospital Admissions, Discharge Summaries, Care Plans, etc.). The barriers to enabling access for First Nations clinical providers were many and included confusion related to privacy legislation, Health Information Custodian status of First Nations Health Teams, connectivity and general capacity. Over the past years, and in collaboration with First Nations Health leaders plus federal and provincial colleagues, FNDHO has systematically chipped away at these barriers.

Creating digital pathways

FNDHO now has a standard, provincially-approved process that First Nations Health Teams can follow to sign up for direct access to provincial EHR Viewers, and several teams have already taken advantage of it. In addition, FNDHO has an active initiative underway with Ontario Health, OntarioMD and Canada Health Infoway to enable integrated access to these systems via local electronic medical record systems.

We are hopeful that we are on the right path to addressing the inequality in access to critical client information for First Nations Health Teams and helping them get the timely info they need to best support their community members.

> **Many communities were unaware that Electronic Health Records (EHR) clinical viewers were available.**

19+
active partners added

Always discovering new partnerships.

Home and Community Care Digital Health Expansion

For a second year, First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care (FNIHCC) worked with us 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.

Whether they sought support for acute communication, remote work or virtual care needs, we provided support tools based on each community's needs. For organizations seeking new tools, we helped determine which systems best fit needs, including:

- supporting system demonstrations
- detailed functionality reviews
- engaging other HCC teams to demonstrate how they use tools, including their benefits and challenges

Through sharing of knowledge between organizations and the delivery of customized supports, we helped advocate for the growth of digital health capacity through training and more. For organizations with existing systems and tools, FNDHO worked to ensure all the needs of the HCC team were met, how the system or workflows could be managed in a remote work environment and provided analysis and requirements documentation where any enhancements or changes to the system were required.

Improving care through policies and procedures

HCC teams were challenged by not having standard policies, procedures and forms they could use for EMRs. In collaboration with FNIHCC and SE Health, we contributed to Policy and Procedure Manuals for HCC teams that will be available to all in 2022. With processes and templates to be integrated for service delivery for HCC team use, they guide best practices for the different services HCC programs and services provided by Nursing, PSW, Home Support Workers.
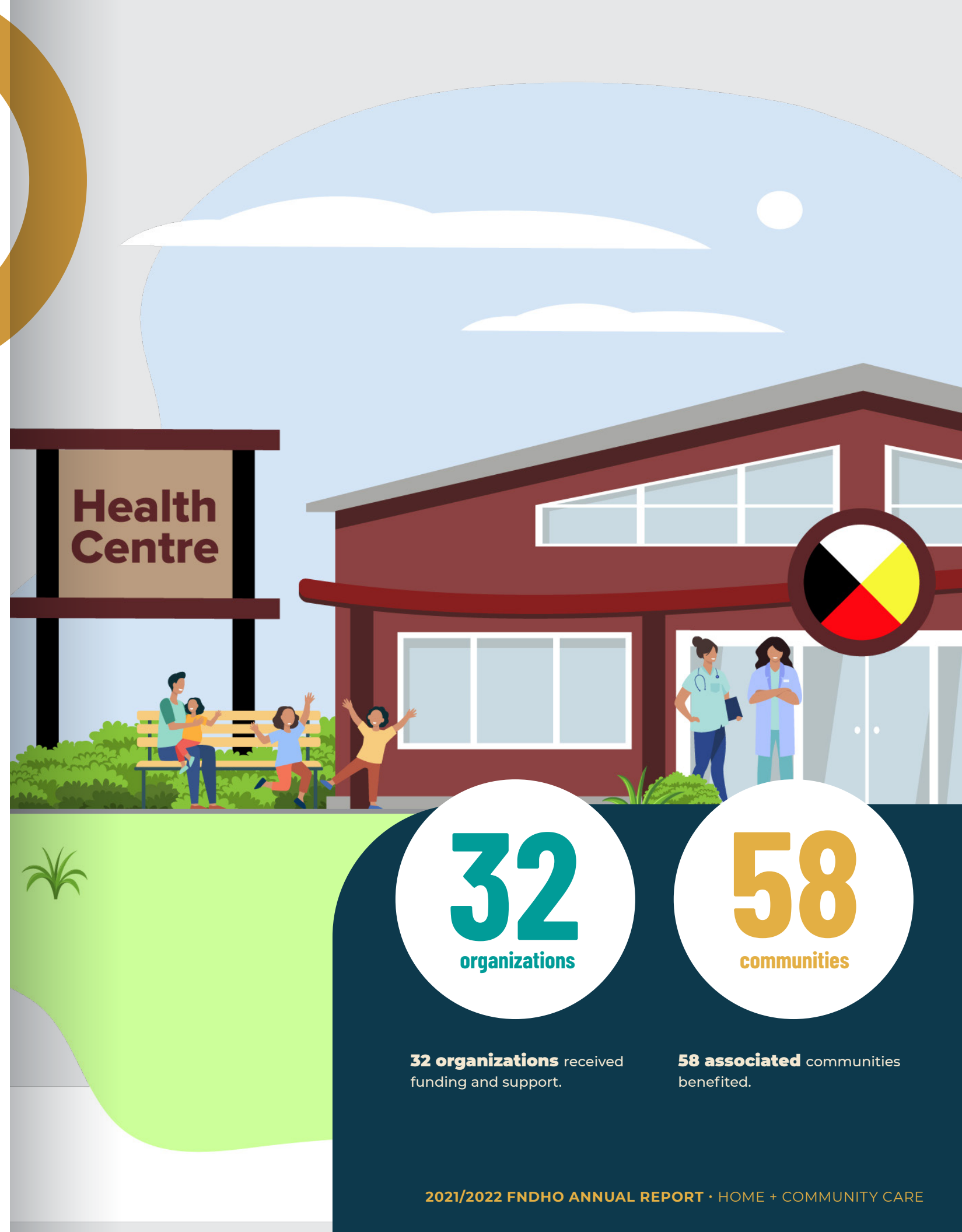
32
organizations

32 organizations received funding and support.

58
communities

58 associated communities benefited.

Privacy and Security Training and Support

Health centres are continually enhancing their privacy and security practices to meet ongoing system changes. In 2021, we continued to work one-on-one with communities to deliver customized support.

We facilitated training and workshop sessions, with a total of approximately 100+ service providers. The customizations included designing a third party disclosure process, forms and letters. Also included were staff training about processes that could be used to obtain and track consent, as well as consultation on privacy sharing, template agreements and privacy breach processing. To support privacy and security training and education, we also developed a course in collaboration with SE Health.

Results: Of the 273 logins, 76 learners with 186 course resources accessed and 149 tests completed.

273 logins	186 course resources accessed	149 knowledge tests completed	76 learners

Privacy and Security is one of the leading areas that FNDHO is asked for support from First Nations Health Teams. In 2021, due to popular demand, we began work to enhance our range of Privacy an Security services and resources.

A rise in cyber-attacks and the use of ransomware led FNDHO to work on Cybersecurity and IT Governance Models. This work has in turn led to collaborations with other First Nations IT groups who are working to advance capacity in this area too. Our hope is to contribute to emerging standards and models that make everybody's information more secure.

We've also launched a Privacy Specialist support program whereby First Nations Health Teams hoping to further evolve their Privacy and Security functions can engage with us and our legal partners to optimize privacy processes and functions, especially those that require release of information to other parties. This new service is now available through FNDHO to all First Nations Health Teams in Ontario.

Privacy Support Program Launched

We facilitated training and workshop sessions, with a total of approximately 100+ service providers.

Journey Mapping and Client-Centric Care Coordination:

The adoption of digital health tools alone does not improve processes. Luckily though, these tools serve as an excellent catalyst to explore improvements to workflows and opportunities for efficiencies. This is an area that the FNDHO team spends a lot of time on with the First Nations Health Teams that ask for our support.

With a view to improving the overall experience for both clients and their team of providers, FNDHO digs into current workflows to identify areas where the use of digital health tools and better access to and sharing of client information can bring benefits. Keeping the client at the centre of things, especially where a client's care team spans across multiple agencies – such as a Health Centre, a Family Health Team, a Tribal Council and a Hospital – FNDHO takes the approach of mapping that client's "journey" though the care process.

This approach of "Journey Mapping" is a highly visual methodology that makes it easy for each participant in that client journey to see their role, and when and where they support the overall process. We have used this approach to support improvements and closer coordination for clients who need to travel out of community to meet with specialists, and we're now using it to map out options for Indigenous Transition Facilitators to better support home care clients moving between hospital and community-level services.

FNDHO is working with multiple communities, Tribal Councils, regional hospitals and provincial partners to optimize care coordination for First Nations community members across Ontario.

Digital Health Leads Initiative

The team at FNDHO is always eager to work with First Nations Health Teams. But we've come to realize that despite a desire to move forward with digital health, Health Directors and health centre staff are typically juggling so many things in a given day that finding time to work on digital health initiatives can be a challenge.

In most provincially-funded health teams there are dedicated IT and digital health support staff who facilitate the continuous evolution of the digital tools and processes that have become mission-critical. Seeking to bring some of this type of capacity to First Nations Health Teams, and to build on-the-ground familiarity with local digital health needs and priorities, FNDHO is launching a Digital Health Leads Initiative.

This initiative, funded by FNIHB Ontario Region, will support First Nations community members from Ontario to train for and become Digital

Health Leads that can lend on-the-ground support to Health Teams in order to assist them to advance their digital health capacity. FNDHO is designing a training and education program for Digital Health Leads, and we'll be establishing a Digital Health Leads Community of Practice to share knowledge, information, best practices and support across what we hope will become a growing network of dedicated, community-focused digital health support resources for busy First Nations Health Teams.
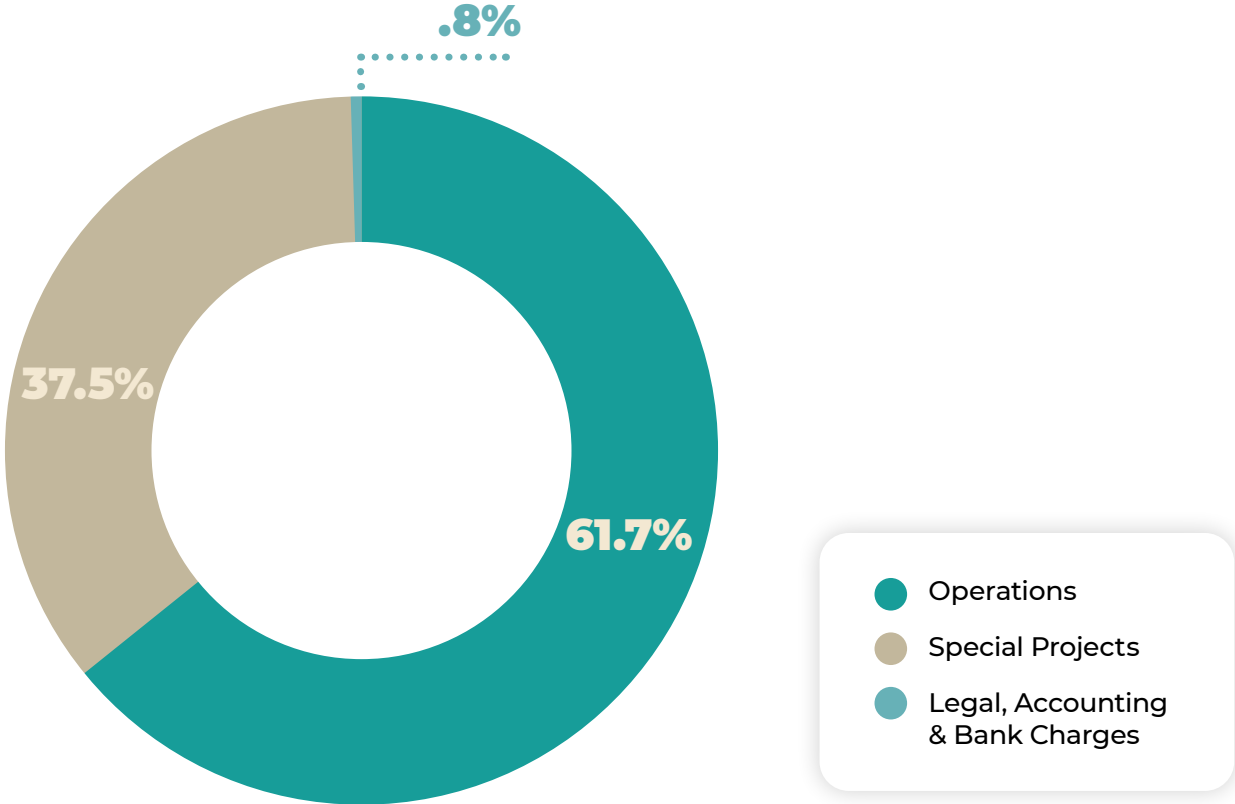
Digital Health Lead training course underway.

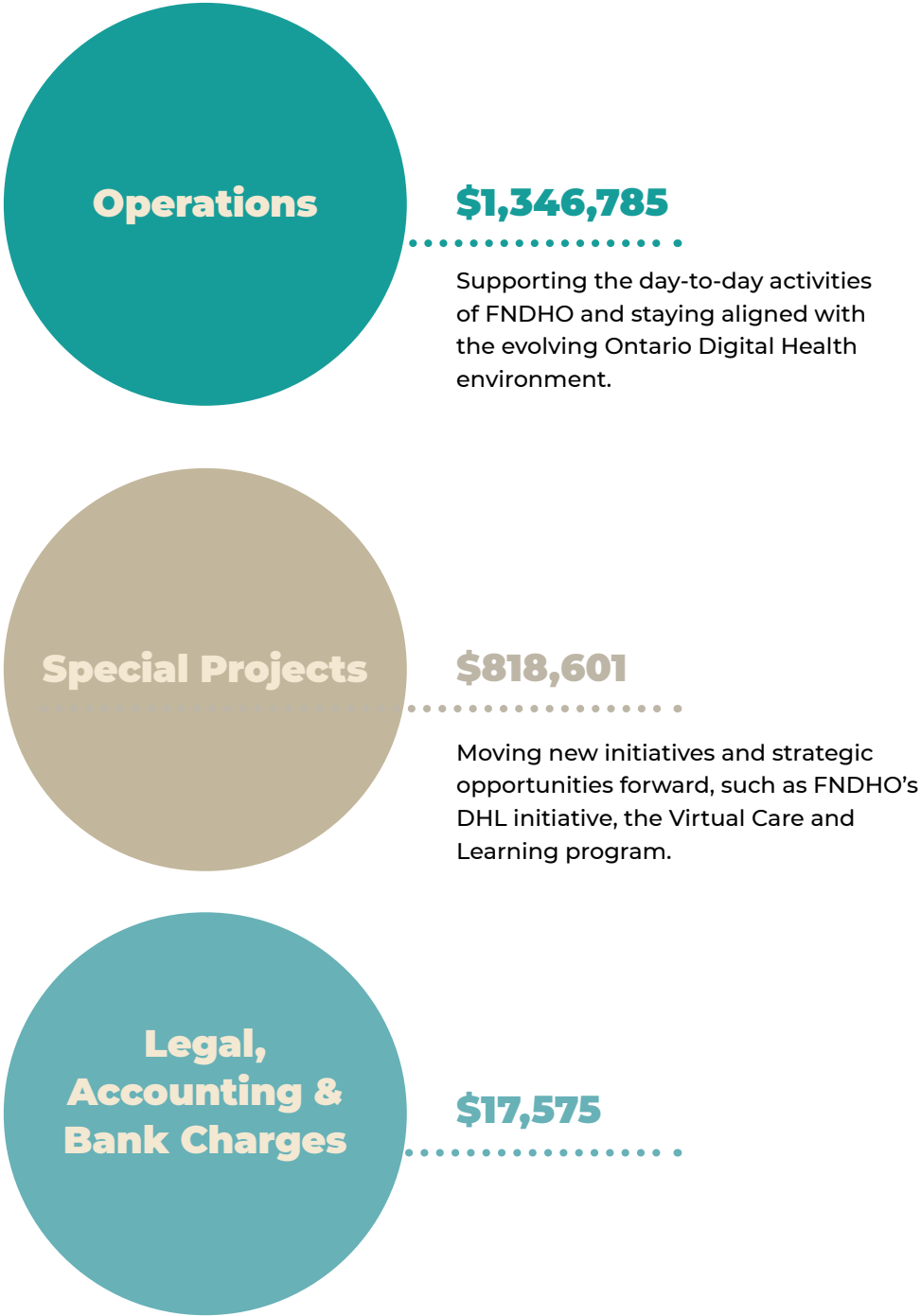Digital Health Lead recruitment and onboarding under development.

Financial Summary

Our numbers from 2021/2022

Funding — **$2,182,961**

Indigenous Services Canada

- .8%
- 37.5%
- 61.7%

- Operations
- Special Projects
- Legal, Accounting & Bank Charges

Expenses

Operations — **$1,346,785**

Supporting the day-to-day activities of FNDHO and staying aligned with the evolving Ontario Digital Health environment.

Special Projects — **$818,601**

Moving new initiatives and strategic opportunities forward, such as FNDHO's DHL initiative, the Virtual Care and Learning program.

Legal, Accounting & Bank Charges — **$17,575**

Closing statements

As FNDHO begins our second year as an incorporated, not-for-profit entity we continue to be grateful to all the First Nations Health Teams across Ontario that contribute their time and knowledge to help us test new models, try new processes, and support the change needed to shift towards digital health-enabled care.

FNDHO is also grateful for the funding and support we receive from ISC Ontario Region, and we also appreciate the strong partnerships and excellent working relationships we have with Ontario Health, OntarioMD, SE Health, and Canada Health Infoway.

The team at FNDHO is excited about the range of initiatives we have underway. We're fortunate to have many examples from other sectors to follow, and many dedicated Health Directors, Program Managers, health staff and government partners who are willing to try new models, refine them as necessary, and undertake the change necessary to make the improvements the whole health system needs in order to operate more efficiently and contribute to better health outcomes for community members.

As always, FNDHO remains committed to sharing our knowledge with others – about what is working and why, and about what didn't work. Our hope is that we will continue to contribute in a positive way to a long-overdue change across the country that will bring with it the sustained digital health capacity that First Nations Health Teams need and that community members deserve.

FNDHO
First Nations Digital Health Ontario

Join our growing digital community.