

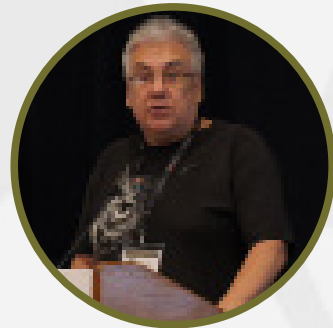


Sioux Lookout  
First Nations  
Health Authority

**2024 Spring Report**  
Seegwan ᓄᓄᓄ

## Chiefs Council on Health (CCOH) Co-Chairs, Chief Donny Morris & Chief Clifford Bull

### Message



As provincial and federal health systems continue to fail our people, we must move forward in exercising our Treaty and Inherent Rights to Health. We signed a Treaty to be partners with Ontario and Canada, and only two are benefiting in that scenario, and that is why we need to design a health system that will meet our needs.

The Chiefs in Assembly have provided strong direction on moving forward:

- Resolution #22-28 *SLFNHA Prioritization of Community Based Health Services and Review of Anishinabe Health Plan (AHP)*
- Resolution #23-06 *Assertion of First Nations Public Health Jurisdiction for the Communities served by the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA)*
- Resolution #23-07 *Adoption of Position Statement on First Nations Authority and Control over Health for the Sioux Lookout area First Nations*

The role of the CCOH is to “provide ongoing political direction, advocacy and oversight in achieving First Nations self-determination over the regional health care system as mandated by the Sioux Lookout Area Chiefs.” We are therefore moving forward in developing strategies on transforming the regional health system based on our right to self-determination. We are working closely with the SLFNHA Board of Directors to develop a pathway forward, based on the direction and feedback from community leadership and membership. We firmly believe that the answers lie with the people and that we need to have these conversations at the grassroots level.

We will be seeking guidance and direction from leadership and Elders at a SLFNHA hosted Special Chiefs and Elders Meeting that will take place in June 2024. Feedback on the following will help further develop the First Nations Authority and Control over Health strategy:

- 1) Nation Based Decision-Making Process
- 2) Regional partnership and alignment approach among supporting organizations.

The strategy will then be presented to the Chiefs in Assembly at the SLFNHA 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) – September 2024.

As a Chiefs Council, we have revised our Terms of Reference to have an increased focus on our political role and define our relationship with the SLFNHA Board. The CCOH participated on several meetings re: COVID-19 and are now getting back on track and laying out the schedule for quarterly meetings.

We commit to sharing CCOH updates and advising on communication and information sharing pathways to gather ongoing direction from all Chiefs..

## SLFNHA Board of Directors Chair, Howard Meshake

### Message



As a Board, we have been working to strengthen governance and processes. This includes clarifying roles and responsibilities and developing board policies and governance practices that incorporate Anishinabe ways. This involves finding the right balance between doing things based on our teachings and values, while also following the requirements of a corporate structure.

In 2021, the SLFNHA Board, CCOH and Tribal Council representatives developed our 5-year strategic plan which was approved by the Chiefs in Assembly in 2021 (*Resolution 21-16 - 2022-2027 Five Year Strategic Plan*). This is the road map that we have set forth for the organization in order to move toward our vision of “Resilient and healthy Nations supported on their path to wellness”.

While implementing the strategic plan, we also adapt our priorities based on the direction we receive from Chiefs. In passing Resolution #23-08 - *Declaration of Public Health Emergency and Social Crisis to Address Mental Health and Addictions Among Sioux Lookout area First Nations*, the Chiefs in Assembly have made it clear that mental health and addictions issue is a top priority. The Board provides strategic direction to the organization on the advancement of this priority area.

Other items that the Board is focused on include:

- Advancing health innovations, regional health services planning and partnership discussions.
- Development of an urban and away from home strategy.

This report highlights the many successes and achievements of SLFNHA. The Board recognizes the hard work and dedication of the SLFNHA Executive and staff. Despite these successes, many challenges remain and there is a lot of work ahead. The colonial funding and policy restrictions that are in place impact the ability to fully respond to community needs and priorities, but we will not waver in our commitment to support communities.

We are fortunate to have the expertise of Sonia Isaac-Mann, CEO & President, as she brings a wealth of experience in negotiating comprehensive health funding budgets and leading transformative change. We trust that she will make great contributions to improving the health care system in the region.



SLFNHA CEO & President,  
Sonia Isaac-Mann

## Message



I am pleased to provide SLFNHA's first mid-year report as a way of providing ongoing information to leadership about the services and strategic activities of SLFNHA.

I am also pleased to report on my first nine months as CEO & President. I have enjoyed meeting and getting to know the leadership and key players in the area and in making Northwestern Ontario home. I have come to witness that there are similar, pressing health issues across the country. Access to quality services, infrastructure, mental health and wellness, long-term care for our Elders are only a few of the issues facing First Nations. There is an extensive list of the work that needs to be done and I am honored to contribute to the efforts in the region.

One of my commitments is to continue efforts to strengthen relationships and partnerships to help align the work and coordinate with one another. I have traveled to several communities and always welcome invitations to visit and learn what your community priorities are and to work on solutions with you.

I have seen the hard work and dedication of the SLFNHA Executive and staff, who are committed to improving health for your communities. This report is an opportunity to highlight the many accomplishments and current key initiatives.

A strategic management framework and approach has been developed to ensure that the entire organization is aligned with the Strategic Plan and that every department, program and staff member are working towards a common goal. It is essential that, as the regional health authority, we have the systems set up to be able to provide clear and measurable outcomes to demonstrate the accomplishments of the directions that leadership have laid out for us. This includes implementing the

direction and mandates from the Chiefs which direct SLFNHA to plan, develop and design processes/models of care that will support: overall improvement in health outcomes for First Nations, ensure that services are closer to home and the connection with communities is strengthened.

In fulfilling my role, I am dedicated to the mission, vision and values of the organization and to advancing the strategic vision that was developed by the SLFNHA Board, CCOH and Tribal Council representatives. As we move forward in strengthening the regional health system, it is essential that we do so at the direction of the communities through a Nation Driven Decision-Making process.

## Background/Purpose

The purpose of this report is to introduce a new practice of increased reporting to strengthen accountability, transparency and improving communications. The objective is to report back to Chiefs with a focus on the strategic directions of the organization.

The goal is to share high level information in advance of the Annual Report and the AGM with the objective of supporting communication and dialogue at the community level and providing increased opportunities and mechanisms for feedback from communities.

Feedback on the activities and strategies in this report can be provided by reaching out to your representative on the Board or CCOH or by contacting Sonia Isaac-Mann, CEO & President.

## CCOH Strategy to increase First Nations Authority and Control over Health

At the 2022 SLFNHA AGM, the Chiefs in Assembly passed calling for *"a significant shift in the organization of the health care system and to ensure that resources are close to home and the connection between SLFNHA and the communities served by SLFNHA is strengthened"*.

In 2023, two Special Joint Meetings were coordinated with participation of Elders, the Board, CCOH and Tribal Councils. The focus of the meetings was to discuss Health Transformation and to help determine how to move forward in the region.

From those discussions, elements of a strategy were put into a Draft Position Statement then presented to the Chiefs in Assembly and adopted by Resolution 23-07 *Position Statement on First Nations Authority and Control over Health for the Sioux Lookout area First Nations*.

The CCOH is leading the development of this Strategy with technical support from SLFNHA, where the team will assist in organizing meetings and strategy sessions to continue the dialogue.

## Proposed Nation Driven Decision-Making Process

As we move forward in a coordinated, regional approach, it is essential that all solutions and plans are developed through Nation Driven Decision-Making processes including full community engagement at the grassroots level.

The CCOH has recently shared a letter to Sioux Lookout area Chiefs that describes the proposed community engagement pathway. This pathway will be supported by establishing a regular cadence of meetings so that discussions and decisions flow through the various decision-making channels.

## Anishinabe Health Plan (AHP) Review

In accordance with Resolution #22-28 *SLFNHA Prioritization of Community Based Health Services and Review of AHP*, SLFNHA has hired a consulting team to conduct a review of the AHP. The AHP is the regional health plan that was released in 2006. There have been many accomplishments and health service developments as well as significant changes in the health care landscape. Evaluation of this plan will provide direction and alignment across all healthcare organizations serving the Sioux Lookout area First Nations. The review will also examine the issue of bringing services closer to home, examining greater resource allocation to SLFNHA First Nations, while strengthening SLFNHA's connection to the communities it serves. The review will also include recommendations and an implementation plan for consideration. A full report will be presented at the upcoming AGM.

## Community Ownership

Focus on determining community-based health care needs and aspirations and developing long-term community relationships. The following initiatives will guide our work:

- *Communication Strategy – Share the strategic plan for community input and feedback.*
- *Kanawenimitisoowin – Develop a community engagement process to learn about the community health care needs and goals.*
- *Community Relations – Connect and collaborate on a long-term continuous basis with communities with the aim of facilitating a sense of ownership*



## Health Transformation

Focus on Anishinabe control and authority to develop and enhance services guided by Anishinabe ways of knowing. The following initiatives will guide our work:

- *Anishinabe control of health programs and services (ie. Non-Insured Health Benefits) – Acquire the needed decision-making, control and authority in order to bring services “closer to home”.*
- *Building Culturally-Informed Services – Develop a healthcare service standard to meet the Anishinabe practices and principles of our communities.*
- *Healthcare Professionals from and in the Community – Develop partnerships to educate, recruit, and mentor community members to meet their healthcare needs.*
- *Develop a Health Transformation plan, which will include an implementation plan that identifies how to work in collaboration with partners.*

## Service Experience

Focus on supporting community members to provide operational feedback to the organization for continuous improvement. The following initiatives will guide our work:

- *Client Experience & Service Improvement Process – Capture, document, and classify the clients’ experiences with our health care services with a rapid follow up communication process with clients for the purpose of improving service delivery.*
- *Patient Advocacy – Build a robust patient advocacy framework to ensure responsive liaison between patients, families, and health care teams.*
- *Integrated Service Delivery – As part of the regional alignment, a review of the SLFNHA service delivery models will be completed with the goal of providing streamlined and seamless services.*

A workplan has been developed to create a roadmap on how to implement the strategic directions. This work is being completed with the SLFNHA Executive with collaborative efforts from all senior staff.

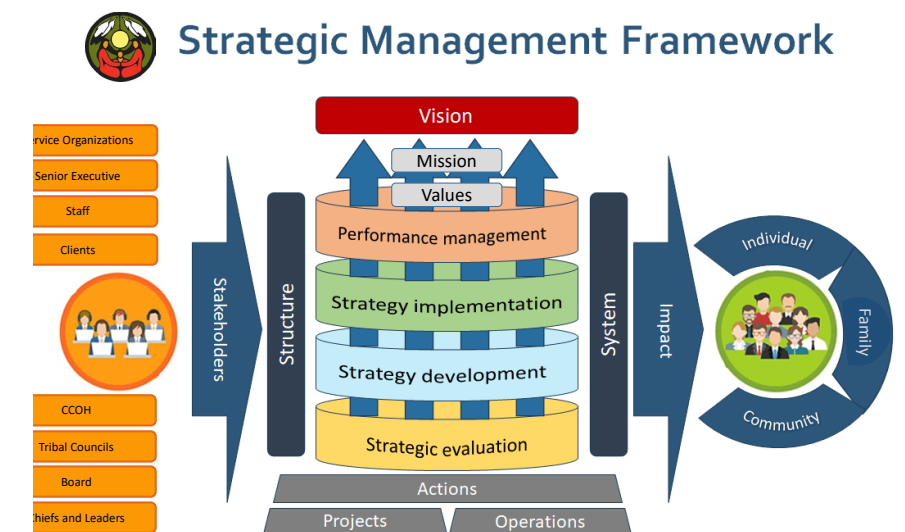
# Organizational Alignment & Efficiencies

In order to achieve organization alignment and efficiencies, SLFNHA is working towards the vision of “Resilient and healthy Nations supported on their path to wellness” and the implementation of the Strategic Plan and Strategic Management Framework.

## Strategic Planning, Policy and Quality (SPPQ) Team

In order to support strategic management and alignment in the areas of organizational improvement and transformation of a regional health system, a Strategic Policy, Planning & Quality (SPPQ) team is being developed. The team will:

- Support the implementation of the strategic management framework which will guide the interconnected processes of operationalizing the strategic plan and developing a regional health transformation strategy for the Sioux Lookout area First Nations.
- Primary focus will be on Health Transformation, Engagement & Partnerships, Policy, Planning & Reporting, Research, Data & Knowledge Exchange, and Quality Assurance (including Service Excellence).
- Provide technical support to the Chiefs, CCOH, Board of Directors and CEO & President.



# Health Innovations & Highlights

While SLFNHA and partners support communities in transforming the health system, it is essential that immediate needs are addressed and that improvements to the health care system occur at multiple levels. SLFNHA is leading many innovative and wholistic approaches to improving health care services and access with a focus on providing services closer to home. These include the following:

- Mental Health and Addictions
  - A Mental Health and Addictions Review was completed in 2022 and a Mental Health and Addictions Model was presented to the Chiefs in Assembly in 2023.
  - Pursuant to Resolution #23-08 Declaration of Public Health Emergency and Social Crisis to Address Mental Health and Addictions Among Sioux Lookout area First Nations - SLFNHA has developed

a Task Force and is in the process of partnering with NAN to hold a mental health and addictions forum.

- Hospital Without Borders Initiative
  - Pursuant to Resolution#19-23 – Mandate for New Hospitals within the SLFNHA Member First Nations, SLFNHA is exploring options for hospital type services at the community level. A draft a Report will be completed in the coming months. This will be shared with the Chiefs at the 2024 AGM as well as a presentation on the additional phases of work to be completed.
- Client Services Department (CSD)
  - The Meno Weecheeeway Patient Navigator Program has expanded to serve clients in Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay and Winnipeg.
  - Expansion of the hostels in Sioux Lookout has helped to accommodate First Nations members as they access health services outside their community. Opening ceremonies for the new hostels are scheduled for June 2024.
- Oral Health
  - The SLFNHA Oral Health team continues to work on short, medium and long-term goals to enhance dental services in the region.
  - Due to the closure of the Sioux Lookout Dental Program (formerly Zone Dental), SLFNHA dental clinic planning and design has been on-going. Currently awaiting the flow of operational funding to continue the process and to open the clinic.
- Nursing
  - Development of a process to support the transition of ISC nursing to First Nations governance and management throughout the region.
  - SLFNHA was successful in obtaining funding for public health nursing during the COVID-19 pandemic. This provided an opportunity to immediately implement and support a public health nursing model with communities and in partnership with Tribal Councils.
- Community Health Hubs
  - SLFNHA has initiated work to create community health hubs in a phased approach to assist in the goal of offering services closer to home.
  - The team is currently planning to procure additional hubs to support communities with space and accommodations for health and community-run services. Currently, there are hubs in Cat Lake, Muskrat Dam, Keewaywin and Webequie First Nations.
- Communications Strategy
  - The communications department is strengthening their communication strategy to support information sharing with communities and to better communicate the programs and services provided by SLFNHA.
- Health Human Resource (HHR) Strategy
  - Development of a human resources strategy that will include training and building capacity for First Nations community members.
  - A proposal has been developed to build First Nations capacity and offer training opportunities.
- Anishinaabewaadiziwin

- Located at the Onaman Zibi Camp, the Anishinaabewaadiziwin team has expanded to provide cultural teachings and activities including offering healing circles.
- The team also supports internal staff with knowledge transfer, sharing cultural norms and teachings around First Nations protocols and ways of being.
- Health Services & Client Coordination
  - Development of a comprehensive client coordination system, strengthening the circle of care and wrap-around supports.
  - Development of a SLFNHA Community Directory and Travel Calendar.
- Health Information Management System
  - The team works towards enhancing digital health capacity, health information management and information sharing.
  - Development of a draft Regional Health Information Management Model.

*A full, detailed report of SLFNHA programs and services will be made available at the September AGM 2024.*

## SLFNHA 10-Year Block Funding

SLFNHA is moving from a 5-year funding agreement with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) towards a 10-year block funding agreement with the goal of entering this agreement by April 1, 2025. With this type of funding agreement, there will be longer-term flexible funding which will allow us to better align resources to meet community needs and priorities. We will also work to ensure that any new funding is community driven and prioritizes programs, services and capital at the community level.

As part of this work, a health economist has been hired to conduct an in-depth analysis and costing of delivering services to the Sioux Lookout region.



# 2023 Resolution Updates

SLFNHA is in the process of conducting a 10 Year Resolution Audit to develop an ongoing resolution reporting and management process to report back multiple years. This will be provided to the Chiefs at the 2024 AGM.

For the purposes of this Mid-Year Report the following is a summary of the activities related to the implementation of the 2023 Resolutions.

All resolutions are available on the SLFNHA website at [www.slnha.com/resolutions](http://www.slnha.com/resolutions)

Resolution	Update
#23-06 Assertion of First Nations Public Health Jurisdiction for the Communities served by the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SLFNHA continues to support communities in strengthening their public health systems, fully recognizing and respecting the unique protocols and strategies of each community.</li> <li>SLFNHA continues to research and discuss interim models for presentation to the Chiefs in Assembly.</li> <li>In response to Ontario’s Public Health Reform process, SLFNHA continues to advocate for the recognition of First Nations public health jurisdiction and has submitted a documented entitled Queries Regarding Ontario’s Public Health Strategy (December 12, 2023) to seek more information on the Ontario strategy to support rights holders in decision making related to the Ontario strategy.</li> <li>SLFNHA has met with Ontario and Canada to begin the development of a trilateral negotiations table to support First Nations jurisdiction over public health. A Terms of Reference has been drafted and provided to Ontario and Canada for their review and feedback.</li> <li>SLFNHA’s Approaches to Community Wellbeing has received confirmation of ongoing funding for public health nursing to continue the provision of public health service to communities. Previous funding was only offered in 6-month increments.</li> </ul>
#23-07 Adoption of Position Statement on First Nations Authority and Control over Health for the Sioux Lookout area First Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Sioux Lookout area CCOH are developing a strategy to strengthen authority and control over health as mandated.</li> <li>SLFNHA is in the planning stages to host a special Chiefs and Elders meeting to seek direction and input from leadership and Elders to further develop the strategy and to form the basis of a Position Paper to be presented back to Chiefs for approval prior to delivering to both levels of government.</li> <li>The CCOH is leading the development of a Nation-Based Decision-Making process to strengthen communication and decision-making processes based on community directions.</li> <li>CEO &amp; President, Sonia Isaac-Mann has been engaging with First Nations, Tribal Councils and NAN to strengthen relationships, create efficiencies and alignment within the regional system.</li> </ul>

#23-08 Declaration of Public Health Emergency and Social Crisis to Address Mental Health and Addictions Among Sioux Lookout area First Nations	<p>The development of a media and advocacy strategy has been initiated, including both an immediate plan for the mental health and substance use report release (development of press kit, press release, press conference, delivery to federal and provincial governments) and mid-term and longer-term advocacy. The strategy contains plans for scheduling meetings to discuss the findings with partners, a social media campaign, and presentations at regional, provincial, and national levels to share the report.</p> <p>A mental health taskforce was developed and includes representatives from the tribal councils and partner agencies. An initial meeting was held in January, and a second meeting is scheduled. An internal Mental Health and Addictions Project Team meeting is scheduled to review relevant reports and recommendations from the reports to how departments can support the work.</p> <p>Planning is underway for a mental health forum to discuss and strategize around the mental health and addictions crisis in communities. We will work in partnership with tribal councils and NAN.</p> <p>Representatives from SLFNHA attended an emergency meeting in Ottawa in late January to bring awareness to the crisis situation. This was attended by representatives of the federal government, but there was no participation from provincial partners.</p>
#23-09 Enhanced Presence in Thunder Bay to Improve Medical Transportation Services	<p>Transportation, Accommodation &amp; Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SLFNHA is seeking support from ISC to implement a transportation service in Thunder Bay.</li> <li>The proposed Thunder Bay Transportation department will consist of 16 full-time staff, 7 casual staff and recruitment will be aimed at hiring First Nation individuals that speak one of the regional dialects.</li> <li>SLFNHA is working with Victoria Inn to provide office space to provide on-site support.</li> <li>SLFNHA is pursuing the purchase of a hotel in the Thunder Bay area. In February, management visited 4 hotels for tours, 2 of which have been given consideration.</li> <li>SLFNHA is waiting for more information from ISC regarding numbers and statistics regarding community members travelling to Thunder Bay for medical.</li> </ul>
#23-11 Acceptance of Proposed Pharmacy Model	<p>SLFNHA Primary Care Team is in the process of completing a proposal for funds to begin this initiative in the 2024-2025 fiscal year. SLFNHA is currently reviewing and discussing potential locations for the SLFNHA Pharmacy site in Sioux Lookout.</p> <p>For the community sites, a phased approach will be utilized and will commence with five communities within the region. A community engagement letter will be sent to these five communities for approval from Chief and Band Council.</p> <p>Using the recommendations outlined in the Pharmacy Business Case, job descriptions have been created and will be reviewed by the SLFNHA Human Resources committee. SLFNHA will begin the hiring of these necessary staff to aid in the implementation, development and growth of the SLFNHA Pharmacy.</p>

# Moving Forward

As SLFNHA moves forward based on the direction of our leadership we have very important work ahead of us as we focus on strengthening SLFNHA as well as supporting a regional process. Over the next few years this will involve the following:

## 1) Strengthening SLFNHA

Strategic Management Framework to implement 2022-27 Strategic Plan and achieve organizational alignment and efficiencies.

- Evaluation and planning for the next strategic plan (2026)
- Continue to develop innovative models for programs and services based on Anishinabe ways.
- Develop strong health system building blocks (data, health information systems, research, planning, quality assurance, advocacy, etc).

## 2) Regional Process based on CCOH Strategy for Authority and Control over Health

- Special Chiefs and Elders Meeting (June 2024)
- Develop Position Statement to be approved by Chiefs and submitted to governments (2024)
- Review of Anishinabe Health Plan (2024)
- First Nation Jurisdiction over Public Health
- Regional Health Framework
  - » Engagement and Partnership Process
  - » Kanawenimitisoowin Engagement Process
  - » Regional Trilateral Partners Table
  - » Regional First Nations Partners Table

We look forward to continuing the work to keep First Nations and partners informed of the work occurring at SLFNHA.

We remain committed to working towards the Vision, Mission and Values of the organization.

**Vision** - Resilient, and healthy Nations supported on their path to wellness.

**Mission** - Transforming the health of Anishinabe people across Keewaytinook by providing community-led services and a strong voice for their community needs.

**Values** - we value respect, relationships, culture, equity, and fairness. We work to protect the Anishinabe teachings of love, courage, respect, wisdom, truth, honesty, and humility.



Sioux Lookout  
First Nations  
Health Authority

61 Queen Street  
PO Box 1300  
Sioux Lookout, ON  
P8T 1B8

981 Balmoral Street  
Suite 200  
Thunder Bay, ON  
P7B 0A6



SCAN ME