Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority

2025 Spring Report

Seegwan ᓱᑲᓐ

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

Message

The CCOH continues to advocate on matters of health on behalf of the Sioux Lookout area First Nations, with technical support from the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA). Specifically, since our last report, the CCOH has been supporting work on several issues in our region, including:

- Continuing to develop the CCOH 5-Point Strategy for First Nations Authority and Control over Health.
- Promoting cultural sensitivity and equitable First Nations representation at the Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre (SLMHC).
- Explore options to co-develop a legal strategy to address discrimination and anti-racism in the healthcare system.
- Supporting the process to promote First Nations jurisdiction over public health.
- Supporting efforts to obtain a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine in Sioux Lookout.

These work items form a part of the CCOH's broader role of providing ongoing political advice and advocacy support on behalf of regional 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."

First Nations Authority and Control Over Health – 5 Point Strategy

Pursuant to Chiefs-in-Assembly Resolution #23-07, a full Position Paper and Strategy for First Nations Authority and Control over Health is being developed for future presentation to the Chiefs. This Position Paper and Strategy will build on the existing principles outlined in the 5-Point Strategy and will incorporate additional input from Chiefs, Elders, health workers, and community members from engagement sessions in 2024 and 2025. The Position Paper and Strategy will present more detailed advocacy and legal options for the Chiefs' consideration to support First Nations authority and control over health.

SLMHC

The CCOH has been strongly communicating to SLMHC the need for improved cultural sensitivity in health care services. The CCOH has called for an independent review of SLMHC's governance. Most recently, the CCOH has further communicated with SLMHC regarding the need for increased First Nations representation on the SLMHC Board of Directors. The CCOH and SLMHC held a joint meeting in the fall of 2024 to discuss each group's needs and the potential for future collaboration.

Understanding that SLMHC is a critical health care provider in our region, it is important to resolve our communities' ongoing concerns with health care services and governance. The CCOH will continue to advocate until equitable and respectful services are available to all community members and governance practices reflect the Sioux Lookout area First Nations.

First Nations Jurisdiction over Public Health

Chiefs-in-Assembly Resolution #23-06 mandates SLFNHA to initiate a trilateral negotiation process with government in respect of the Sioux Lookout area First Nations assertion of jurisdiction over public health. The CCOH has been supporting SLFNHA in this portfolio with advice and additional direction regarding planning. The Chiefs-in-Assembly provided further direction through Resolution #24-07, detailing the roles of SLFNHA and the CCOH at a future negotiation table.

A negotiation table was initially scheduled to begin in early 2025. However, with an uncertain political landscape, this has delayed the start since government partners have been unable to participate in the process during election times. The CCOH will continue to support SLFNHA as it advances this portfolio with the aim of rescheduling negotiations in the near future.

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

On behalf of the CCOH, we would like to congratulate SLFNHA on celebrating 35 years in Health. We support you wholeheartedly in your efforts to improve health for our families and communities in the North.

CHIEFS COUNCIL ON HEALTH
ADVOCATING
PROTECTING
BRIDGING

SLFNHA Board of Directors Chair, Cynthia Fiddler

Message

Boozhoo and Hello,

On behalf of the SLFNHA Board of Directors, we are excited to share new developments that are taking place. First, I formally welcome our new Board members, Wanda Atlookan-Sugarhead, Eabametoong First Nation, appointed by Matawa First Nations Council. We also welcome Rhoda Angees, Wunnumin Lake First Nation, appointed by Shibogama First Nations Council. We would also like to take time to thank Howard Meshake for his time with the Board. His input and advocacy efforts are admirable. We wish him and his family continued health and wellness.

We happily share that the SLFNHA Strategic Plan 2022-2027 is being implemented and highlights are included in this report. Planning and evaluation for the next strategic cycle is expected to start in fall 2025. Expect an update at the upcoming SLFNHA Annual General Meeting (AGM) in September.

We would like to also mention that a Board of Directors Summary template has been produced and shared with Board members, with the intent to improve our communications with respective Tribal Councils and communities.

In summer 2024, SLFNHA's Strategic Policy, Planning and Quality (SPPQ) team started drafting updated recruitment and orientation materials for the Board of Directors. A Board of Directors Governance Manual, Board Skills Matrix, and Policy Manual are currently being finalized to produce a Board of Directors Orientation tool that will enhance onboarding and recruitment. All new Board materials are in compliance with SLFNHA policies, corporate by-laws and the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010.

In fall 2024, the Board participated in a joint meeting with the boards of the SLMHC and the Sioux Lookout Regional Physician Services Inc (SLRPSI). Holding a trilateral governance meeting of the major regional health care organizations has been a longtime goal. We see this as a step forward in coordinating health services and priorities in the region, and we look forward to continuing on this collaborative pathway with future joint meetings.

We are committed to doing our best to find the right balance between taking action based on our First Nations teachings and values, and also following the requirements of a corporate structure. This report highlights the many successes and achievements of SLFNHA. As SLFNHA celebrates 35 Years in Health, we know there is a long way to go to achieve health equity in the Region. We will remain steadfast in our efforts and will continue to strive to improve health services.

SLFNHA Served Communities

SLFNHA President & CEO, Sonia Isaac-Mann

Message

We are pleased to provide SLFNHA's second Spring Chiefs Report as a way of providing ongoing information to leadership about the services and strategic activities of SLFNHA.

I am also pleased to report that I have now been with SLFNHA for nineteen months. One of my continued commitments is to strengthen relationships and partnerships to help align the work and coordinate with one another. We have strengthened several partnerships thus far, including Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM), Tikinagan Child & Family Services, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), SLMHC, SLRPSI, Sioux Lookout Food Bank, Out of the Cold Shelter and many others.

SLFNHA recognizes the importance of partnerships, relationship building, and engagement with the other health system partners that interact with First Nation clients. To this end, we are developing a crosswalk/ mapping document that describes our health services relationship with Tribal Councils, Political Territorial Organizations, Independent First Nations, and the non-Indigenous organizations that clients connect with. This document will help SLFNHA better inform our own health service coordination, accountability, reporting, and governance practices.

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 has 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. This will support overall improvement in health outcomes for First Nations, ensure that services are closer to home, and the connection with communities is strengthened.

There has been substantial momentum in completing goals, implementing system improvements, and advancing culturally informed health initiatives at SLFNHA. Key milestones in health transformation, community engagement, and service experience demonstrate the organization's commitment to enhancing client care, integrating services, and reinforcing Indigenous leadership in health programming.

In October 2024, SLFNHA was informed by ISC of significant changes to funding under the Non-Insured Health Benefits program (NIHB) in relation to some of our core programming in

client travel and accommodations. It was clear that the proposed changes would significantly affect how SLFNHA offers certain services to community members, particularly those who receive care in Sioux Lookout. These changes were presented to the Chiefs-in-Assembly at the October 2024 Annual General Meeting, where the Chiefs directed that SLFNHA provide technical support for a political strategy that opposes the said changes. SLFNHA is continuing to advocate on this matter in meetings with ISC. We will provide updates to the Chiefs as developments occur.

In fulfilling my role, I remain 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. I always welcome community invitations to learn what your community priorities are and to work on solutions with you.

As we celebrate 35 Years in Health, I look forward to continuing to build a more robust health system with our regional partners. We honour all those who contributed to SLFNHA, your contributions have helped us get to where we are today.

Purpose

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

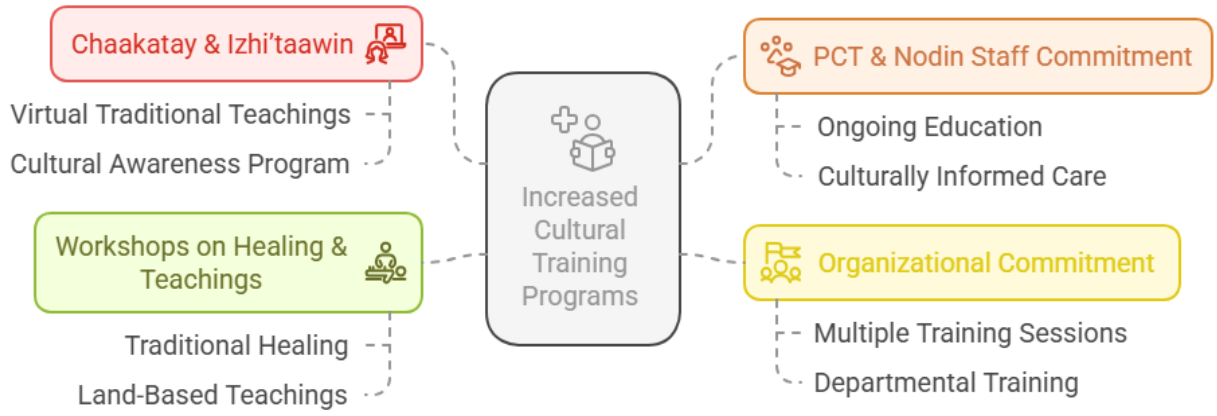
Feedback on activities in this report can be provided by reaching out to your representative on the SLFNHA Board of Directors, CCOH representative, or by contacting Sonia Isaac-Mann, President & CEO.

CCOH	Current Membership	
Representatives from 5 Tribal Councils, 2 independent First Nations, Treaty #3 area representative, 2 Elders. Provide ongoing political direction, advocacy and oversight in efforts to increase First Nations self-determination and Authority and Control over Health. Lobby and advocate for the removal of systemic barriers to achieve equitable healthcare.	Chief Donny Morris	Independent First Nations Alliance
	Chief Clifford Bull	Lac Seul First Nation
	Chief Eddie Mamakwa	Shibogama First Nations Council
	Chief Lorraine Crane	Windigo First Nations Council Representative
	Chief Delores Kakegamic	Independent First Nation (Sandy Lake)
	Chief Merle Loon	Independent First Nation (Mishkeegogamang)
	Vacant	Treaty #3 Communities Representative
	Chief Lois James	Keewaytinook Okimakanak
	Vacant	Matawa First Nations Council
	Grace Matawapit	CCOH Elder, Female
	Hammond Lac Seul	CCOH Elder, Male

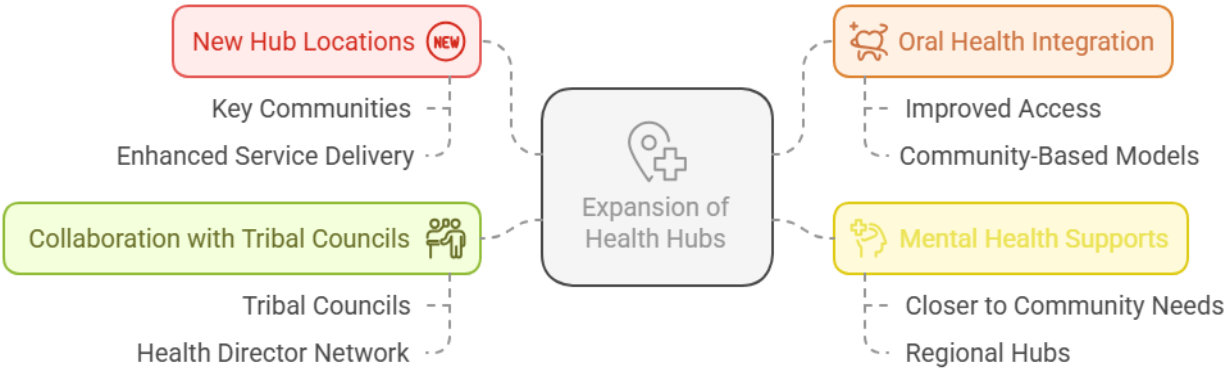
Board of Directors	Current Membership	
Representatives from 5 Tribal Councils and 2 independent First Nations, 2 Elders. Responsible for policies, governance practices and strategic planning. Provides annual reports to the membership via the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Adapt priorities based on the Chief's direction received at the AGM.	Cynthia Fiddler	Independent First Nation (Sandy Lake)
	Michelle Kakegamic	Keewaytinook Okimakanak
	Tanya Bottle	Independent First Nation (Mishkeegogamang)
	Rhoda Angees	Shibogama First Nations Council
	Samuel McKay	Independent First Nations Alliance
	Vacant	Windigo First Nations Council
	Wanda Atlookan-Sugarhead	Matawa First Nations Council
	Thomas Spade	Elder, Male
	Vacant	Elder, Female

Key Achievements and Accomplishments

Increased Cultural Training Programs for Staff



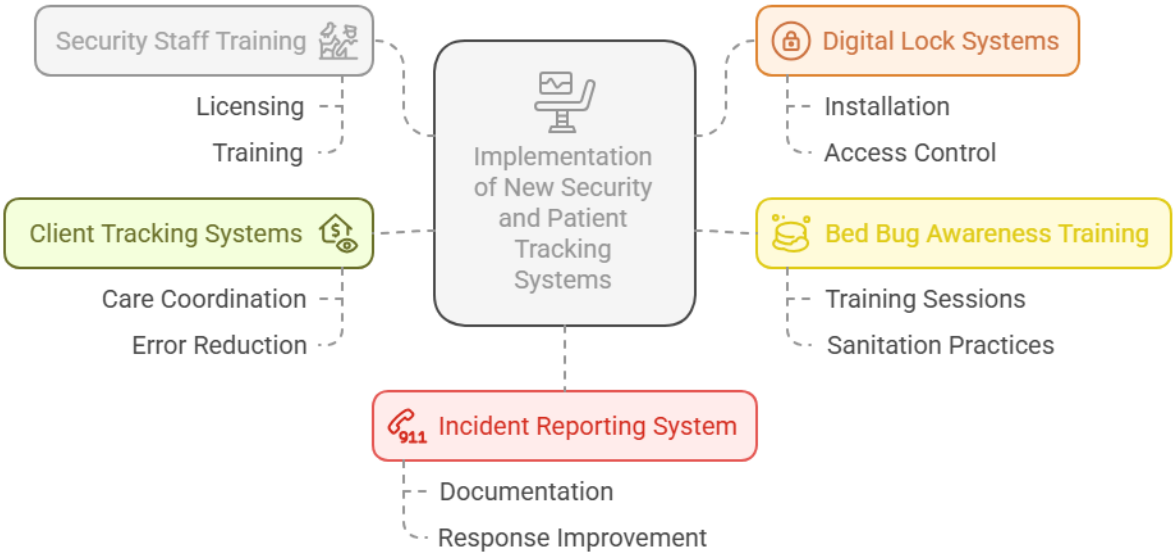
Expansion of Community Health Hubs and Service Integration



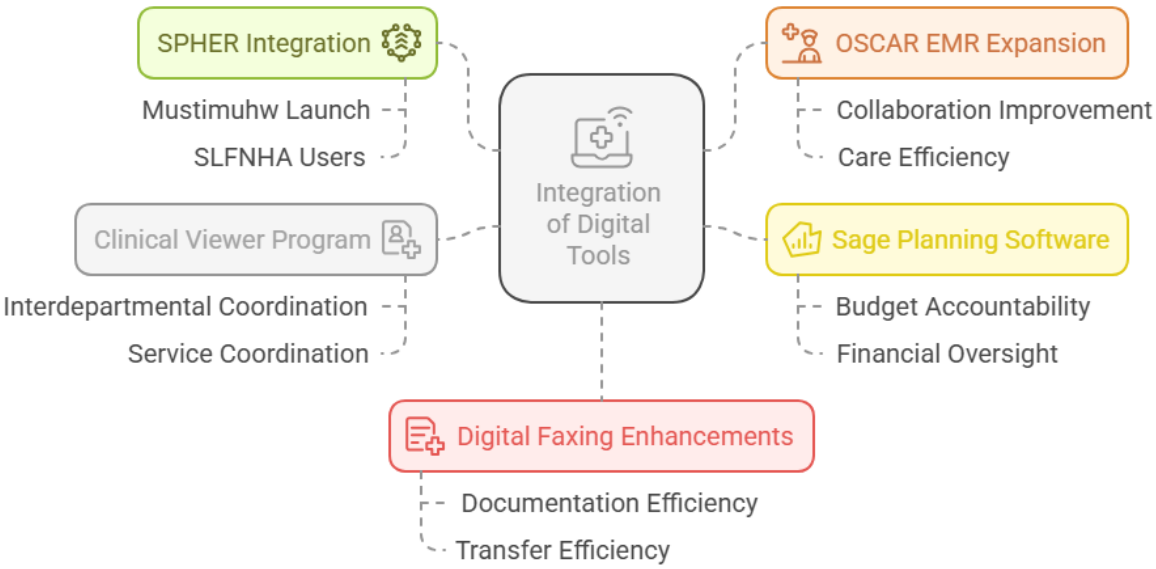
Enhancing Regional Mental Health Strategies

Key Achievements and Accomplishments (Cont.)

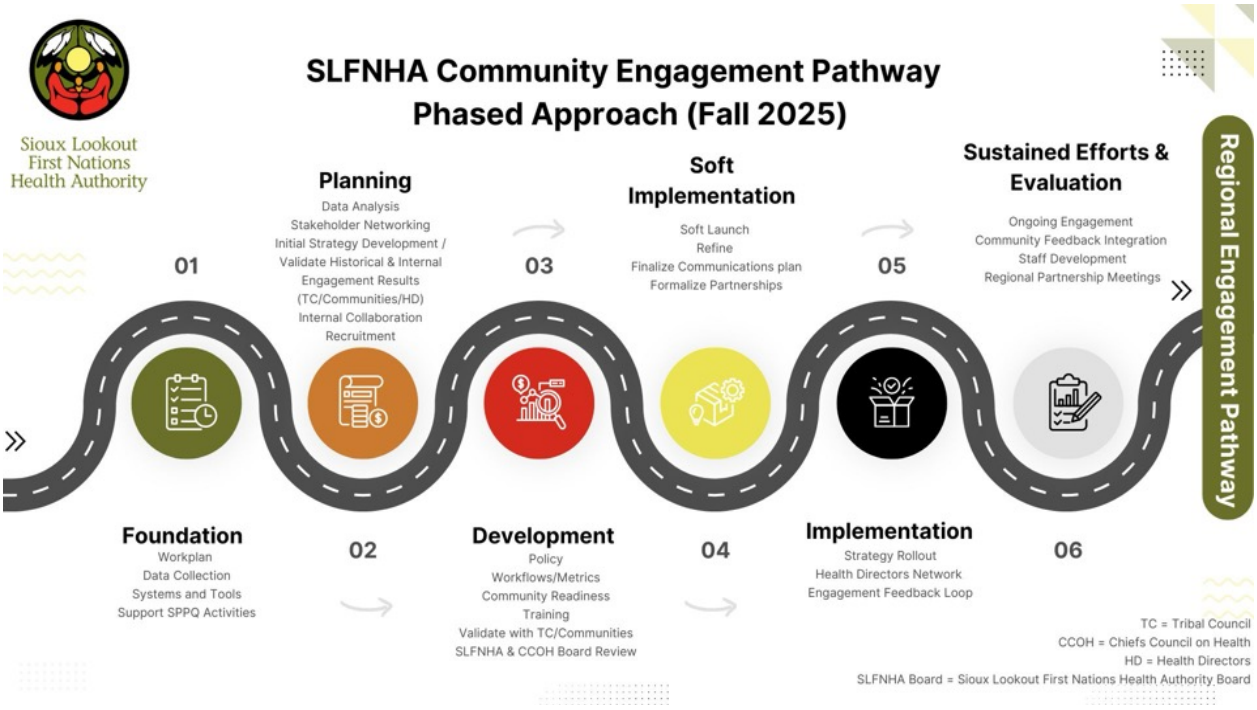
Implementation of New Security and Patient Tracking Systems for Improved Client Safety



Integration of Digital Tools for Health Records and Service Coordination



Regional Engagement Approach



The goal of the approach is to establish a regional health planning mechanism to improve coordination and health access throughout the region. This will be achieved by improving partnerships to develop collaborative approaches based on common priorities.

As we continue to move towards a coordinated, regional approach, it is essential that plans and solutions are developed and inclusive of First Nations voices. It is recognized that full community engagement at the grassroots level is required.

This pathway will be supported by establishing a regular cadence of meetings so that discussions and decisions flow through the various decision-making health leaders.

Goals include:

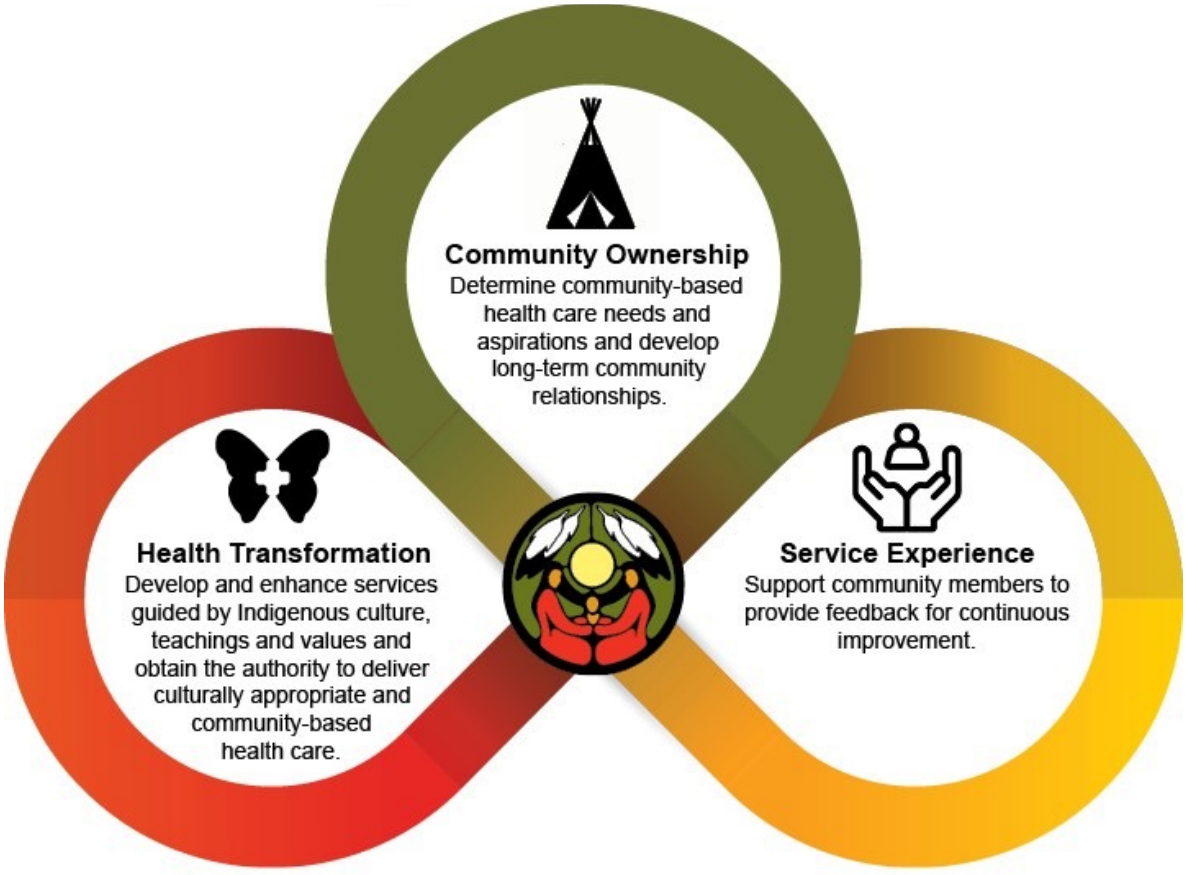
- Respect and honour First Nations voices as they request authentic community engagement.
- Recognize the importance of the regional Tribal Councils and the need to develop and enhance partnerships.
- Recognize the need to identify priority areas and how to support and embrace the work as a collective.
- Co-develop an Engagement Pathway to ensure Nation driven decision making processes guide the work.
- Co-develop a Communications Strategy and information pathway between the CCOH, SLFNHA, Tribal Councils, and Independent First Nations.
- Proposed Chiefs Caucus meetings of each Tribal Council, planned jointly between SLFNHA and the respective Tribal Council.
- Establish Quarterly Regional First Nations Partners meetings between SLFNHA and Tribal Council Executive.

SLFNHA Area First Nations Advisory Groups

As part of the work to strengthen community-driven approaches, multiple advisory groups/ committees have been formed. Every group member is acknowledged for their commitment and contributions to the co-development of resources in various health areas.

Active	Inactive/Not Started
• Nursing Strategy Advisory	• Data Governance Committee
• Research Advisory Committee	• Health Information Advisory Group
• Oral Health Advisory	• Youth Advisory Circle
• Elders Advisory Circle	Steering Committees: • Short-term, based on specific health-related topics
• Mental Health & Addictions Task Force	
• Health Services Advisory	

2022-2027 Strategic Plan Updates



Strategic Alignment

Community Ownership – 104 Total Goals

- Community Relations (44 goals) – Strengthening relationships with communities, improving engagement strategies, and supporting initiatives that foster community-driven health solutions.
  - Plan to establish a First Nations Health Director network to enhance regional collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Kanawenimitisoowin Community Engagement Process (7 goals) – Enhancing community participation, increasing awareness, and developing collaborative engagement frameworks.
  - Conducted a regional needs assessment in partnership with St. Joe's to identify gaps in psychiatry services.
- Communications Strategy (53 goals) – Enhancing internal and external communication to improve transparency, service awareness, and engagement with community members.
  - Drafted a SLFNHA Communications Strategy to standardize messaging and improve information dissemination across departments and communities.

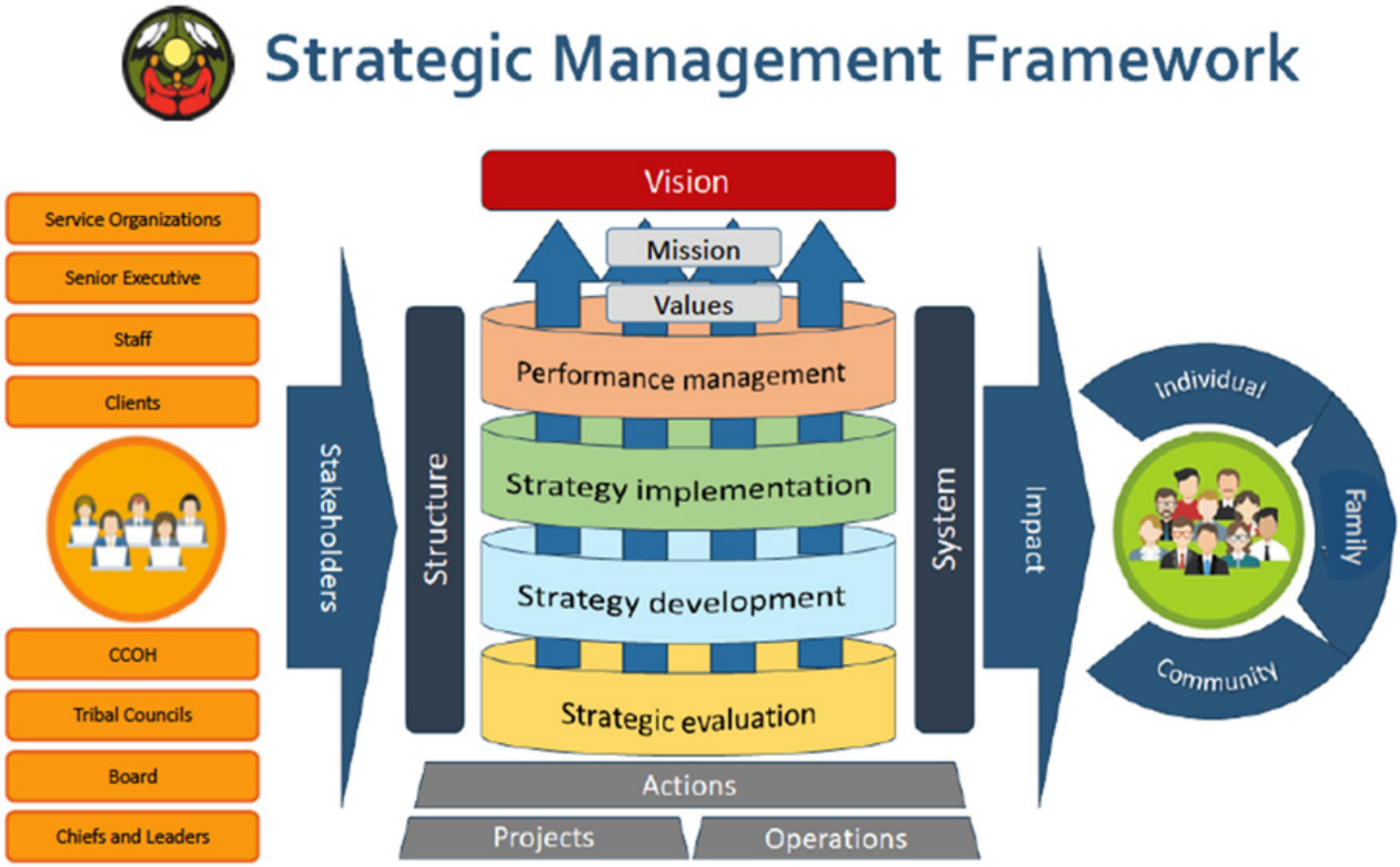
Health Transformation – 100 Total Goals

- Anishinaabe Control of Health Programs (18 goals) – Advancing self-determination in healthcare by supporting governance structures, policy development, and community-led health planning.
  - Successfully completed a 10-year resolution audit, which provides direction to the Board of Directors and key leadership groups.
- Building Culturally Informed Services (29 goals) – Increasing cultural competency within the organization, integrating traditional practices, and enhancing culturally responsive care.
  - Launched the Chaakatay Virtual Traditional Teachings and Izhi'taawin Cultural Awareness Program to provide ongoing education.
- Healthcare Professionals from and in the Community (25 goals) – Focus on recruitment, retention, and training of Indigenous healthcare professionals to build local capacity.
  - Secured a full-time psychologist for Nodin, increasing access to mental health services for clients.
- Health Transformation Plan Development (28 goals) – Strategic planning to improve health infrastructure, integrate new health technologies, and expand service delivery models.
  - Completed renovations for a regional dental clinic, improving oral health services.

Service Experience – 362 Total Goals

- Client Experience & Service Improvement (259 goals) – Enhancing service accessibility, patient safety, and operational efficiency through system-wide improvements.
  - Implemented a new lock system at hostels to improve security and controlled access for guests and staff.
- Patient Advocacy (10 goals) – Strengthening policies and frameworks that support patient rights, advocacy efforts, and responsive care models.
  - Developed a Client Rights and Patient Advocacy Framework to formalize advocacy processes and improve patient support structures.
- Integrated Service Delivery (93 goals) – Advancing coordinated care approaches, streamlining service transitions, and optimizing resource utilization for wholistic client support.
  - Expanded OSCAR Electronic Medical Record (EMR) access to ISC nurses, enabling more integrated and collaborative client care.

Organizational Alignment and Efficiencies



SLFNHA continues to work towards implementing the Strategic Management Framework and co-developing innovative frameworks/models for programs and services:

- Ethics Framework
- Policy Framework
- Patient Advocacy Bundle
- Governance, Risk & Compliance Framework
- Planning Framework and Cycle
- Continue to develop the necessary health system building blocks (data, health information systems, research, planning, etc)

Strategic Policy, Planning & Quality (SPPQ) Team Update

Policy & Planning

The SPPQ Team assists with several policy and planning initiatives in support of SLFNHA's Executive Team, the Board of Directors, and the CCOH. This has included the review and revision of Board governance resources, health system mapping, and providing technical support for CCOH advocacy efforts, as discussed elsewhere in this report. This part of the team also supports SLFNHA's accreditation process from a legal and policy perspective.

Engagement & Partnerships

- Regional Engagement Approach – There have been a total of 4 meetings with First Nation Health Partners, which includes Tribal Council Executives.
- Draft Community Engagement Pathway to be validated and endorsed by First Nations.
- Draft Engagement & Partnerships Strategy to be validated and endorsed by First Nations.

- The Engagement & Partnership team completed 5 meetings with Independent and Tribal Councl Health Directors; Mishkeegogamang Ojibway First Nation, Shibogama First Nations Council, Windigo First Nations Council, Independent First Nations Alliance, and Matawa Health Co-Operative.
- The Engagement and Partnerships team presented at the Health and Nursing Directors Meeting during the Approaches to Community Wellbeing (ACW) Annual Meeting to introduce the team and gather direction on the Health Directors Network concept, engagement, and health priorities.

- The Engagement and Partnerships team presented at the Shibogama First Nations Tribal Council Health Directors Meeting in March 2025 to introduce the team and gather direction on the Health Directors Network concept, as well as engagement and health priorities.
- In collaboration with SLFNHA Communications, monthly SLFNHA Updates will be aired on Wawatay starting in April 2025.
- SLFNHA Real Property and the SLFNHA Events Coordinator, coordinated and attended the Mishkeegogamang Health Hub Grand Opening in March 2025.

Quality Assurance

Accreditation Journey – Includes Short Documentary Project

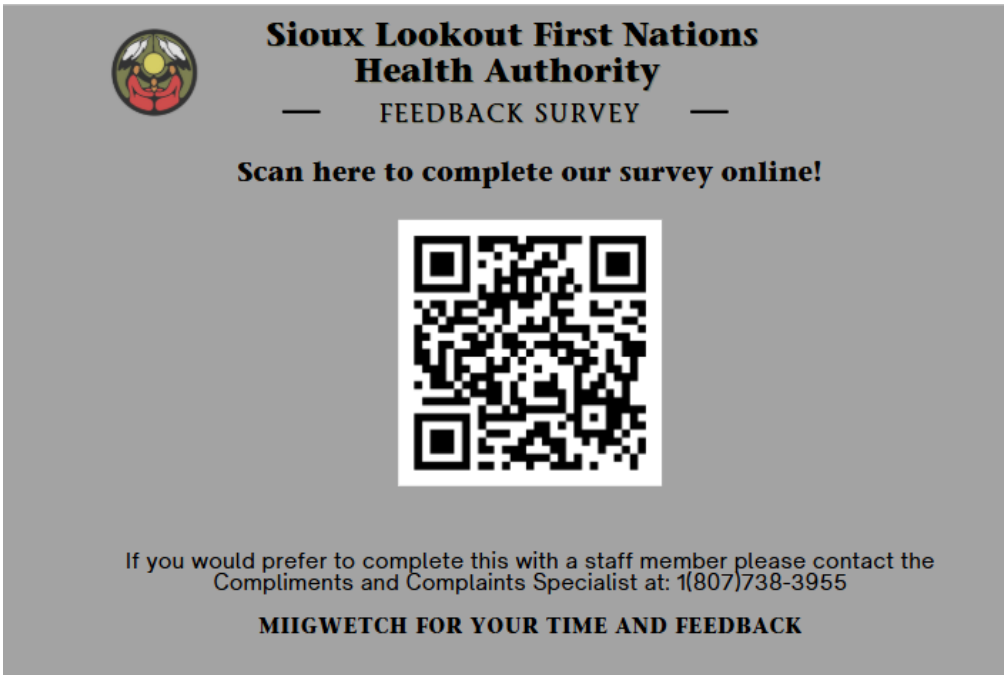
- SLFNHA is embarking on a video journalism project highlighting the importance of Accreditation, celebrate the history of the organization, and visualize the client journey.
- SLFNHA is enrolled in Accreditation Canada's Primer Program.
- Achieving Accreditation is like a quality check for our organization. It makes sure our health services are providing the best possible, high-quality and safe care.
- In line with SLFNHA's Strategic Direction of Service Experience, this program will:
  - Support the development of client feedback and follow-up processes.
  - Guide the development of advocacy and ethical frameworks for decision-making.
  - Streamline service delivery.

Privacy Program

SLFNHA's Privacy Management Program has expanded to be able to provide:

- Centralized Release of Information process for all departments.
- High-Quality compliance with privacy legislation through thorough chart access auditing and security audits.
- Increased staff training and capacity.
- Draft policy enhancing our Informed Consent procedures, and increased information sharing amongst partners.

SLFNHA is looking for feedback! Please Complete our Client Feedback Survey.



HOW TO PROVIDE COMPLIMENTS OR COMPLAINTS

Sioux Lookout
First Nations
Health Authority

Mail:
Attention: Compliments and Complaints Specialist
Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority
61 Queen Street, Sioux Lookout ON P8T 1B8

Phone:
807-738-3955

Email:
complimentsandcomplaints@slfnha.com

Location:
61 Queen Street
Sioux Lookout ON

Your feedback will be forwarded to the Quality Assurance Team. Please note; should immediate support/navigation be needed please contact the Meno Weecheeheeway Patient Navigators (807-737-3850) or Hostel Support Services.

VP Community Services, Janet Gordon

- **SLFNHA Medical Directors -** We are happy to share that there is a new Medical Director, Dr. Yvette Emerson and Associate Medical Director, Dr. Alanna Morgan, that have joined the SLFNHA team. We recognize and thank Dr. Terri Farrell for her contributions throughout her tenure.
  - A process will be developed and shared regarding accessing support.
- **Mental Health and Addictions**
  - The Neegan-Inabin Mental Health and Addictions Forum was held in Winnipeg, November 2024.
  - A Mental Health & Addictions Task Force has been established along with a Terms of Reference describing their work. Representatives are from Tribal Councils and First Nations. Guided by the mental health and addiction model, the Task Force prioritized youth and treatment as key areas.
  - The 3rd Kiiwe Minoyaawin (Return to Wellness) Family Camp was hosted at Onaman Ziibi. Next camp is scheduled for July 2025.
- **Approaches to Community Wellbeing**
  - SLFNHA Food Sovereignty Summit, Indigenous Doula Training.
  - SLFNHA coordinated a Health and Nursing Directors Meeting.

VP Regional Services, Monica Hemeon

- **Communications Strategy -** The Communications Department continues to strengthen the strategy to support information sharing with communities and to better communicate the programs and services provided by SLFNHA.
- **SLFNHA Radio Program -** A monthly SLFNHA radio program called Wiindamekewinan ᐃ̇·ᐣᑕᒪᑫᐃ·ᓇᐣ (the news you share with others) will be aired on Wawatay starting in April 2025.
- **Client Services -** SLFNHA has been meeting with ISC/NIHB through working groups and steering committees to advocate for improved medical transportation and a coordinated client services system.
- **Anishinaabewaadiziwin -** The team supports knowledge transfer, sharing cultural norms and teachings around First Nations protocols and ways of being:
  - Creating a plan for Youth and Elders Advisory Circles.
  - Currently have an Elders Advisory Circle.

VP Finance and Corporate Services, Brian Calleja

- **SLFNHA New Fiscal Relationship (NFR) 10-Year Grant Submission -** The NFR grant has been approved and work is underway to have this effective April 1, 2025. This will be longer-term, flexible funding which will allow SLFNHA to better align resources to meet community needs and priorities.
- **MRI Donation -** SLFNHA MRI Donation to SLMHC.
- **Medivac Services -** SLFNHA participates in joint partners meetings with NAN, SkyCare, ISC, and ORNGE regarding medivac services and support.
- **Community Health Hubs**
  - Community Health Hubs support communities with clinical health space and accommodations for health and community-run services. Currently, there are hubs in Cat Lake, Muskrat Dam, Keewaywin, and Webequie First Nations.
  - Mishkeegogamang and Nibinamik are also complete and ready for operation.
  - The next phase will include Sandy Lake and North Caribou Lake, to be expected summer 2025.
- **Onaman Ziibi**

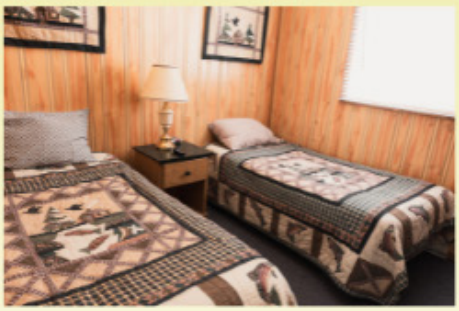
  Onaman Ziibi is located on the Traditional territory of Obishikokaang First Nation (Lac Seul First Nation). Obishikokaang is an Ojibwe First Nation band government located on the southeastern shores of Lac Seul, 39 kilometres (24 mi) northwest of the town of Sioux Lookout, Ontario.

  What we offer:

  - Private cabins
  - Large indoor & outdoor space
  - Staff retreats
  - Meals
  - Recreational activities
  - Land-based and traditional teachings

Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority

Experience Onaman Ziibi



Book your stay now!

(807) 582-9713

OnamanZiibi@slfnha.com

Scan for more information and to Book

Onaman Ziibi has 7 cabins and can accommodate 29 people comfortably.

- **Cozy, well-appointed rooms next to Vermilion Lake**
- **Private cabins with large indoor and outdoor space**
- **Family-friendly activities: canoeing, archery, and beading (Book in Advance)**

2024 Resolution Updates

The following is a summary of the activities related to the implementation of the 2024 Resolutions.

Resolution	Update
#24-06 Airport Infrastructure	• November 2024 -A jointly signed aviation advocacy letter was sent to the Minister of Transport and the Ministry of Transportation- Ontario. • December 2024 - An invitation for a teleconference to discuss the letter was received from the Regional Advisor -Ontario and a Policy Advisor from the Minister of Transport. The advice provided to the group was to strongly direct the advocacy to the Minister of Finance. Unfortunately, this was at the time the Minister of Finance submitted their resignation. The SLFNHA letter has been drafted to the Minister of Finance awaiting final approval to send. • March 2025 – An invitation has been received to meet with Deputy Minister (DM) of Transport Canada – DM Thangaraj for early April 2025. The SLFNHA President/CEO office is in the process of arranging this meeting. • March 2025 – Newly selected Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Transport (previous Minister of Finance). • NAN and the Northern Ontario Aviation Committee (NOAC) continue with their aviation advocacy work. Chiefs of Ontario (COO)resolution acknowledging that the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) report “Closing the Infrastructure Gap by 2030) did not include an assessment of airport infrastructure needs. The resolution now calls for acknowledgement of the critical lifeline of remote airports. Other needs include amending the National Airports Policy to include an Essential Service Airport standard and invest in navigational aids, address funding shortfalls and identify and fund the infrastructure gaps and resources required for operations by 2030. • SLFNHA has been contacted by a reporter with CBC who is interested in the northern airport infrastructure issues and views this as a story worth reporting on. The reporter will be connecting with area partners to compile the report.
#24-07 CCOH SLFNHA Mandates for Public Health Jurisdiction Negotiations Table	• This initiative has been delayed due to the 2025 provincial and federal elections. SLFNHA is prepared to renew negotiations with its government partners after the elections are complete. SLFNHA continues to support communities in strengthening their public health systems, fully recognizing and respecting the unique protocols and strategies of each community. • Throughout 2024, SLFNHA, ISC, and the Ontario Ministry of Health worked extensively to co-develop a Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Public Health Jurisdiction Negotiation Table. A final draft of the TOR was being reviewed by all parties in early 2025. • While planning the first meeting, both provincial and federal elections were called. The government partners were unable to participate in this initiative during the elections. • SLFNHA is currently waiting for the federal election period to end before we reach out to all government partners again. At that time, we will receive updates and ask to recommence negotiation.

#24-08 Support/ Advocate for Continued and New Hostel & Transportation Services	• SLFNHA has established local transportation services in Thunder Bay effective: April 1, 2024, on the understanding with ISC-FNIHB-NIHB-Medical Transportation Senior Program Manager, that SLFNHA would be reimbursed for costs associated with the provision of the service. Negotiations ensued for the recovery of costs and ISC-FNIHB-NIHB-MT has agreed to cover the costs of purchasing 5 passenger vehicles and some operation costs, but gaps still remain. SLFNHA will continue to engage with ISC-FNIHB for the full cost of operating the program on an ongoing basis. • SLFNHA, in conjunction with ISC, has established a steering committee and working group to resolve issues with service and funding shortfalls, including transportation in Thunder Bay. ISC has indicated that they are willing to work with SLFNHA to continue providing transportation services in Thunder Bay. SLFNHA has provided ISC costs associated with operating the service and while some funding has been provided, it falls short of the actual costs to run the transportation service in Thunder Bay. SLFNHA will work with ISC to see if the funding gap can be closed or determine if it should discontinue the service. • CBC has aired a story on the issues related to the challenges associated with medical transportation, VP Regional Services travelled with a CBC reporter from Toronto to Kingfisher Lake in early February. Interviews were conducted with the Chief, Health Directors, Nurse In Charge (NIC), Home & Community Care Coordinator, Referral Clerk and Clients.ISC-FNIHB-NIHB-MT Sioux Lookout has been provided with feedback on a summary of the many concerns associated with the Medical Transportation Program. • The Chiefs-in-Assembly call on NAN to advocate on behalf of the communities for appropriate service coverage including funding for hostel services in Sioux Lookout and funding to continue the medical transportation support being provided along with the establishment of a hostel in Thunder Bay – no response to date.
#24-09 Regional Health Survey	• Sioux Lookout area Chiefs Resolution #24-09 was shared with partners at First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) and COO. • A meeting was proposed with FNIGC to determine how to collaborate to ensure communities served by SLFNHA are able to participate in the Regional Health Survey to inform health programs, policies, and services that align with the needs of the population. This meeting has not yet occurred but is expected to be scheduled soon. • A request to COO to reveal the names of the communities randomly selected to participate within their sample size has been sent. The data has not yet been received.

#24-10 Support Kasabonika Treatment Fund	• SLFNHA met with a community representative to discuss the issues experienced in the community. The community expressed serious concerns regarding Suboxone misuse and the risk of accidental overdose among young people. Individuals require substance use treatment and the urgent need for robust aftercare services. • SLFNHA noted their commitment to supporting the resolution and advocating on behalf of Kasabonika Lake First Nation. SLFNHA also stressed the importance of a coordinated effort with NAN to advance the resolution. • The community acknowledged SLFNHA's role as an advocate, recognizing that SLFNHA does not directly provide treatment funding.
#24-11 Support Mishkeegogamang Treatment Center Project	• SLFNHA remains committed to supporting Mishkeegogamang in their quest to seek funding from ISC. Upon word that the funding proposal is successful, SLFNHA will work with Mishkeegogamang to provide operational support as stated in the resolution.
#24-12 Support Dental Clinic	• Two submissions to the federal Oral Health Access Fund were approved to proceed to Stage II and were submitted on December 20, 2024. One submission was to operate the SLFNHA Dental Clinic & one to operate a mobile denture service. Approvals were expected in winter 2024 have been extended to spring 2025. • Preliminary program transfer discussions occurred with ISC, NIHB & Sioux Lookout Dental Program (SLDP). At the December 2024 meeting, ISC stated their draft transfer framework was not supported by Senior management. SLFNHA leadership requests to review the framework have gone unanswered. A high-level follow-up meeting between SLFNHA and ISC led to a March 2025 date to resume discussions. The March meeting was postponed until May 1, 2025, due to the government being in an election caretaker position. • SLFNHA leadership has approved reserve funds to purchase the required small equipment, instruments and software to support a small start-up for the Dental Clinic. SLFNHA leadership is considering a risk management strategy using reserve funds to open the Dental Clinic in a fee for service model that would bill NIHB, Jordan's Principle and other insurance companies for services rendered. • Meetings are pending with the Health Systems Integration Fund and ISC Children's Oral Health Initiative to discuss funding for the 2025/26 fiscal year. The Oral Health Business Case is near completion.

Moving Forward

As SLFNHA moves forward based on the direction of leadership, we have very important work ahead of us in our focus on continued improvement of health services delivery, organization improvements and accreditation, and supporting our regional First Nations health partners. This will include the following:

- Continuing to work in partnership and promote health and wellness through community activities such as Little Bands and Northern Bands Hockey Tournaments, public health education and training, collaboration with regional health partners, and participation in community-led events.
- Exploring opportunities for further Knowledge Exchange events with regional and national Indigenous health partners to continue to share information, best practices, and empowering approaches.

Upcoming Events

- A Special Chiefs & Elders Meeting 2025 will be hosted by Lac Seul First Nation July 8-9, 2025. A meeting invite has been shared and an agenda is forthcoming.
- A full, detailed report of SLFNHA programs and services will be made available at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which is scheduled for September 10-12, 2025. The AGM will be hosted by Lac Seul First Nation. 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 SLFNHA.

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

Mission - Transforming the health of Anishinaabe people across Kiiwetinoong 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 Anishinaabe teachings of love, courage, respect, wisdom, truth, honesty, and humility.

Wishing you, your families, and communities health and wellness.

Miigwetch.

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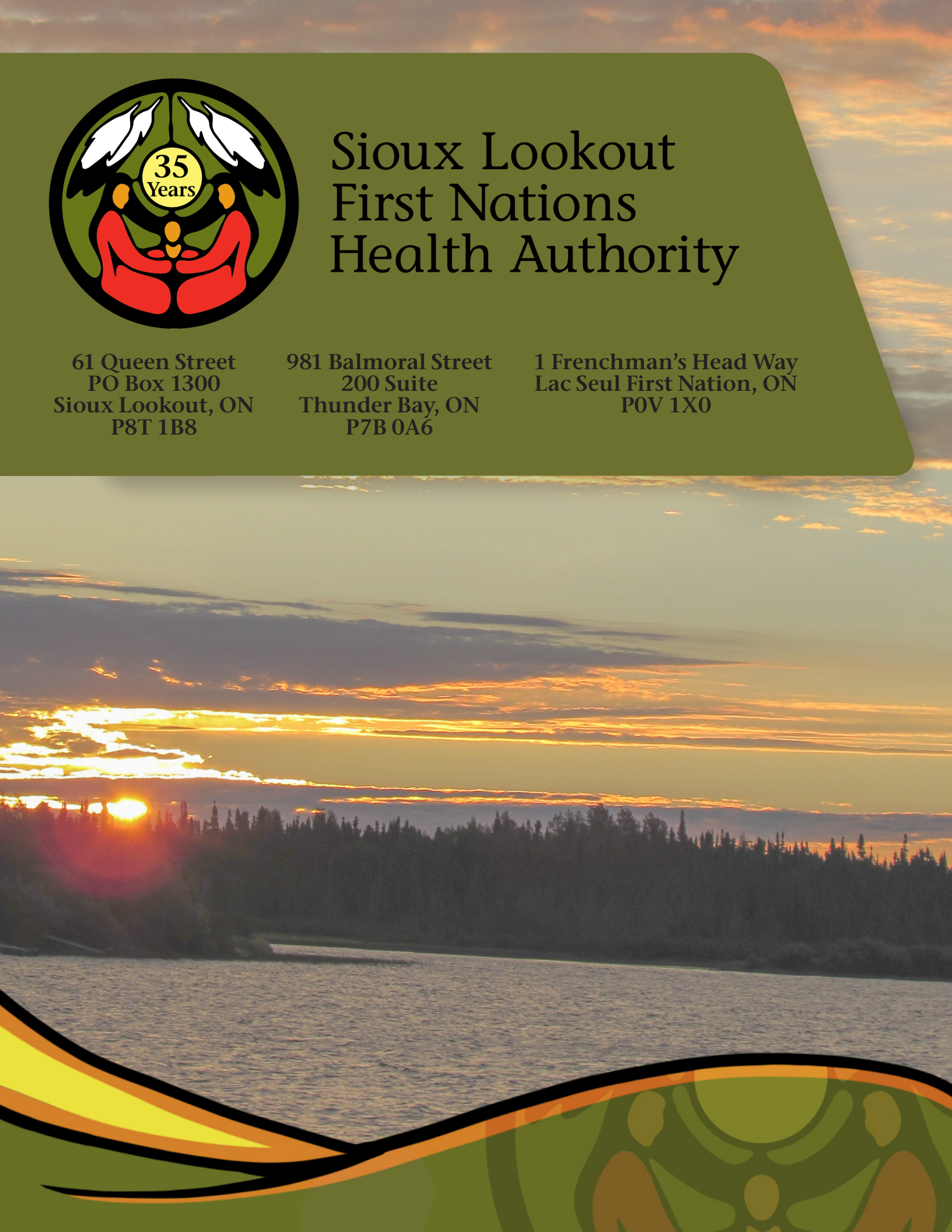
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