

Newsletter – Your Health Matters

Justin Wright, Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services

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Greetings from Minister Wright

I am honoured to introduce myself as the new Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services. My name is Justin Wright, and I am committed to continuing the important work underway to improve health outcomes for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Alberta.

My focus is on improving access to primary care, keeping care close to home, and ensuring patients can get the preventative support they need.

I look forward to connecting with you about the work underway to advance Indigenous health care in Alberta, and I welcome your ideas, feedback, and perspectives. Please find my contact information below.

Measuring progress in Indigenous health

As I begin this work with you, I am focused on the next phase of improving primary health care for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Alberta.

Building on [The Way Forward](#), the ministry is working to turn the milestones identified by the Indigenous Primary Health Care Implementation Panel into clear ways to measure progress. In the coming months, the Panel will be brought back together to review this work and help confirm the path ahead.

I want this next phase of work to reflect your community's priorities, measure progress in a meaningful way, and support continued accountability and improvement in Indigenous health care.

Collaborating with Indigenous communities

Preparations are underway for a full summer of community visits and conversations about the health priorities that matter most to Indigenous communities.

I see these visits as an important opportunity to listen, learn, and bring the right people together to support a coordinated response to local needs.

I want to sincerely thank the Indigenous communities that welcomed Minister LaGrange from [Hospital and Surgical Health Services](#), along with colleagues from [Advanced Education](#) and [Primary Care Alberta](#), for conversations about your priorities. I look forward to building on these connections and continuing this work together in the months ahead.

[Improving Indigenous health care | Alberta.ca](#)

Improving care practices: Indigenous hair cutting

We are reaching out to Indigenous organizations and community partners to listen with care to experiences, concerns, and cultural teachings related to the handling, cutting, and care of Indigenous hair.

This work is guided by the experiences shared by Indigenous patients whose hair was cut or handled in ways that did not honour its deep cultural and personal significance while they were receiving care.

If you or someone you know has experienced having their hair cut or handled in a way that did not feel respectful or culturally safe while receiving care in a health facility, or if you would like to share your thoughts to help guide this work, please reach out to Melita Avdagovska, Director of the Indigenous Health Division's Policy and Planning Branch, at Melita.Avdagovska@gov.ab.ca.

Strengthening cultural competency through engagement

We are continuing to engage with Indigenous partners and health system stakeholders — including Indigenous community-based organizations, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and professional groups — to help shape and strengthen cultural education for health care staff.

This work is important to me because it helps ensure the Organizational Learning Cultural Competency Toolkit is accurate, relevant, and grounded in the lived experiences of Indigenous communities and the health system.

So far, two in-person sessions and one virtual session have provided valuable early input on priority knowledge areas and how to make learning practical for day-to-day care. That feedback is already helping to strengthen the content and ensure it reflects the perspectives and priorities of Indigenous communities in Alberta.

We will continue these conversations in the months ahead to gather broader input and further validate the content, so it can reflect a range of perspectives and be applied across care settings.

If you are interested in contributing, I encourage you to share your knowledge and insights by contacting IndigenousHealth@gov.ab.ca.

Celebrating National Indigenous Peoples Day

[National Indigenous Peoples Day](#), on June 21, is a time to celebrate the cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Observed on the summer solstice, this day holds spiritual and cultural significance for many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

As we approach this important day, I encourage you all to participate in a way that feels meaningful to you, whether that's attending a local event, spending time learning, or taking a moment to reflect.



A message of gratitude

As I begin my work as Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services, I want to sincerely thank Alberta's health care professionals, partners, and community members for the care, dedication, and perseverance you bring to improving our health care system. I know this work is not always easy, and I deeply appreciate the difference you make in the lives of Albertans every day.

I look forward to working alongside you to strengthen services, build strong partnerships, and support a healthier future for communities across Alberta.

Contact information

PPHS.Minister@gov.ab.ca

If you would like further updates from the Indigenous Health Division, sign up for the Assistant Deputy Minister's newsletter by emailing IndigenousHealth@gov.ab.ca