



# Indigenous Health

## Handle with Care

How will we fix what's ailing our health care system?



### Issue

First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in Alberta have higher rates of chronic illness, mental health challenges and addictions due to the impacts of colonization and ongoing health inequities. They live shorter lives, continue to experience racism and culturally unsafe care in our health care system and are disproportionately impacted by the opioid poisoning crisis.

- Latest data shows First Nation male life expectancy has fallen below 64 years of age – 18.2 years lower than the life expectancy of non-Indigenous Albertans.
- [A December 2021 report from Alberta Health](#) found Indigenous peoples made up 22% of all opioid poisoning deaths in 2020 – while only representing approximately 6% of the province's population.
- There continue to be concerning reports of racism and discrimination in Alberta's health care facilities, with many Indigenous patients facing presumptions of substance abuse or intoxication when seeking medical care.
- Many First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities struggled to access health care during the pandemic, including receiving much-needed vaccines.
- We must improve equitable access to primary health care services across the province.
- Health care solutions must be created, implemented and assessed by Indigenous peoples. "Nothing About Us Without Us."
- Government has taken some actions that will play into eventual solutions. These include:
  - > Releasing an Anti-Racism Action Plan in July 2022 to outline a path "for taking meaningful action to address racism."
  - > Operating the Indigenous Wellness Core, a program that partners with Indigenous peoples, communities and key stakeholders to provide accessible, culturally appropriate health services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in Alberta.
  - > The Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health Care System (MAPS) Indigenous Advisory Panel, that recently shared advice and recommendations to help transform the primary health care system for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

### KEY QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES & PARTIES SHOULD THEY WIN THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION

- How will your party improve health equity for Indigenous peoples in Alberta?
- How will your party ensure Indigenous peoples receive the care they need, when they need it, in their own communities?
- How will your government address racism and discrimination in our health care system?
- What will your government do to support Indigenous communities in addressing the opioid crisis?