

HONOURING PROGRESS: KEY MILESTONES IN INDIGENOUS HEALTH

This timeline highlights significant milestones in Indigenous health, celebrating the progress and achievements over time. From traditional healing practices to modern medical advancements, it showcases key events and developments that have shaped the health and wellness of Indigenous communities. Each milestone represents a step forward in the journey towards health equity, resilience, and cultural preservation.

Pre-
1600s



Indigenous peoples have their own traditional healing practices and medicines, deeply connected to their cultures, communities, and environments.

The British North America Act makes Indigenous health a federal responsibility, leading to the establishment of Indian hospitals. These facilities are often underfunded and provide substandard care.



1867

1945-
1960s



Indigenous hospitals continue to operate, often in poor conditions. Many Indigenous people are subjected to non-consensual medical experiments and poor treatment.

The Indian Health Policy is introduced, recognizing the need for Indigenous control over health services and acknowledging the social determinants of health.



1979

1988



The Canadian ‘health transfer policy’ announced in 1986 offered First Nations the opportunity to take over the administration and delivery of health services on reserves.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) report is published, recommending a comprehensive strategy to improve Indigenous health, including the need for culturally appropriate care and more significant Indigenous control over health services.



1996

2003



The National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) starts addressing neurological and developmental conditions through research and advocacy.

The Canadian Medical Association Journal releases guidelines on diagnosing and managing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), emphasizing the need for culturally appropriate care for Indigenous communities.



2005

2005



The First Nations Health Blueprint for British Columbia is launched.

Tinu Akinwande, Marlyn Bennett, June 2024

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The Aboriginal Children’s Health and Well-being Measure (ACHWM) is developed, providing a holistic tool for assessing the health of Indigenous children, including those with developmental disabilities.



2011

2013



The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) in British Columbia officially takes over health services previously delivered by Health Canada, marking a significant step toward self-governance.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) releases its final report, including several health-related Calls to Action, emphasizing the need for equitable access to health services and respect for Indigenous healing practices.



2015

2016-
2019



The Government of Canada invests in the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy, addressing mental health and neurological issues in Inuit communities.

The Indigenous Services Canada department is created, focusing on improving health and other services for Indigenous communities.



2019

2019



The First Nations-led Indigenous Cancer Strategy is launched, addressing cancer care disparities among Indigenous peoples.

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) releases a comprehensive health strategy that includes components addressing neurological conditions and developmental disabilities



2020

2022



The Indigenous Health Research Fund (IHRF) includes specific grants for studying neurological conditions and brain-based developmental disabilities among Indigenous populations.

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) launches the Indigenous Child Development Initiative, focusing on early diagnosis and intervention for developmental disabilities, including neurological conditions.



2023

2023-
Present



In 2023, the Federal Budget pledged to dedicate \$2 billion through a new Indigenous Health Equity Fund to tackle the barriers Indigenous communities encounter when seeking health care services. Today, Indigenous health services continue to evolve with ongoing efforts to integrate traditional healing, address systemic inequities, and promote self-determination in health care.