

OGIMAAWABIITONG

KENORA CHIEFS ADVISORY

OGIMAAWABIITONG

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

KENORA CHIEFS ADVISORY

OGIMAAWABIITONG

OUR MISSION

Ogimaawabiitong - Kenora Chiefs Advisory is committed and dedicated to providing culturally appropriate health and social services which address the needs and enhance the wellbeing and capacity of community members in our affiliated First Nations.





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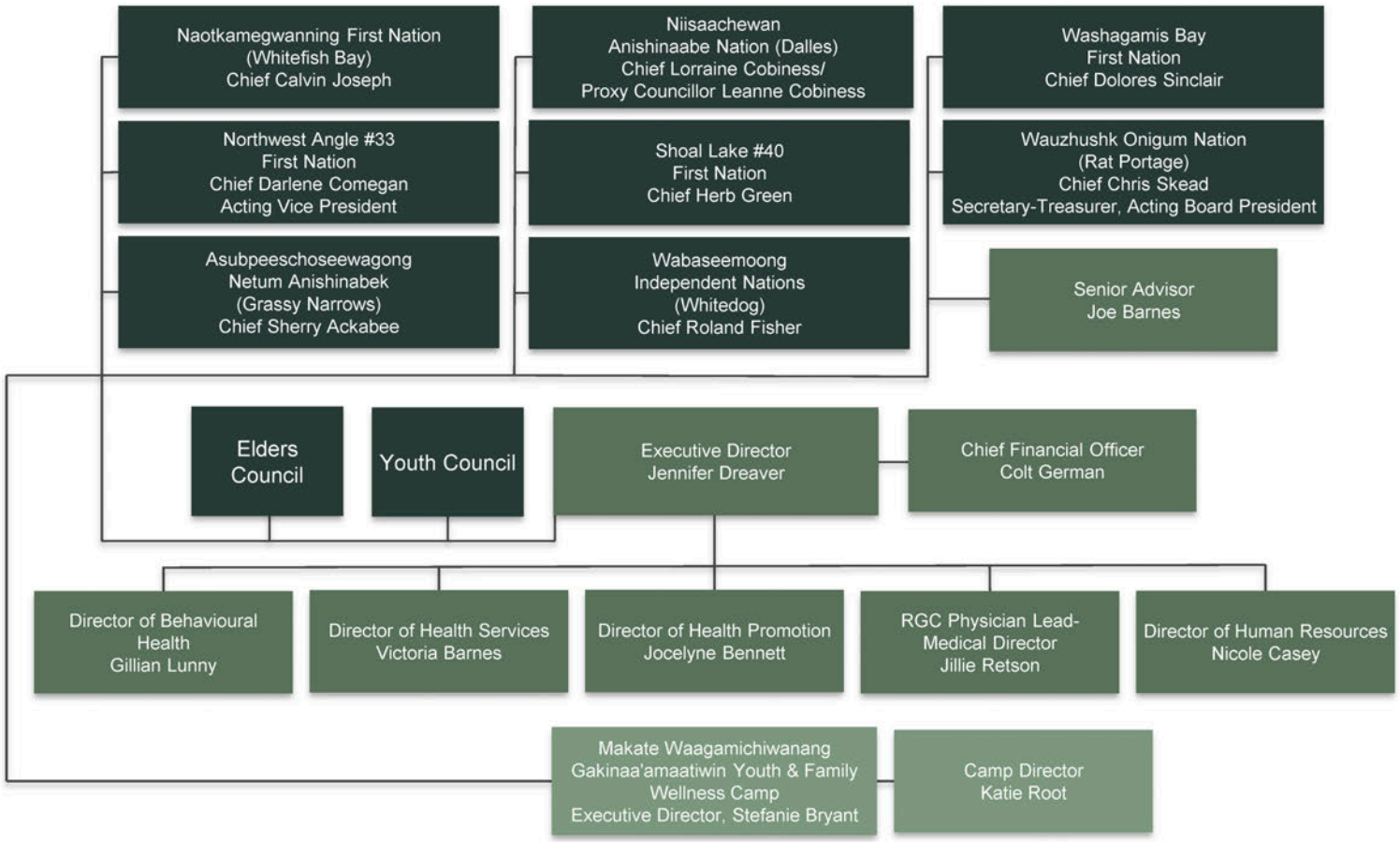
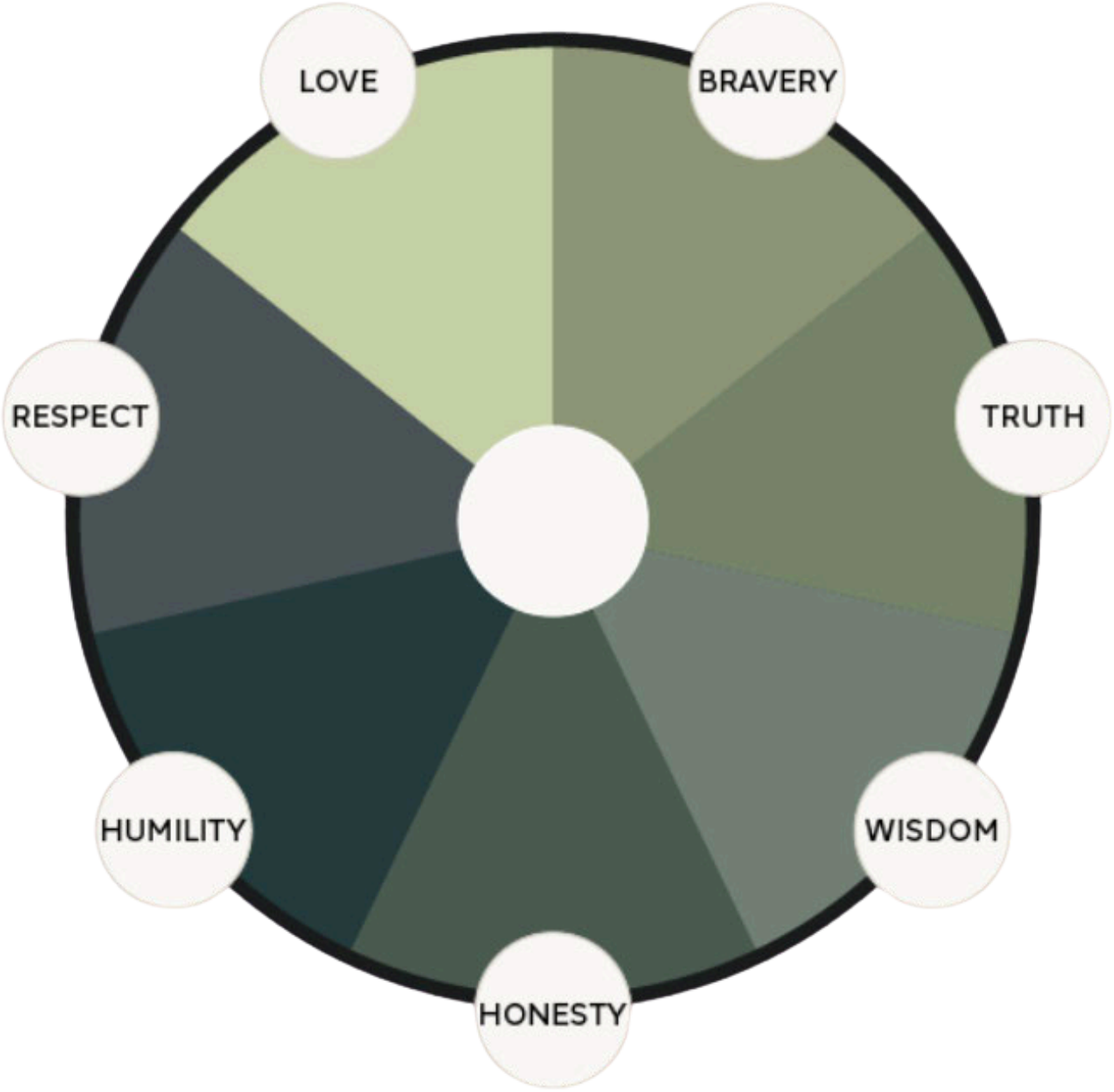
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE





7 SACRED TEACHINGS



CODE OF ETHICS

KCA shall maintain a culture which recognizes and values ethical conduct through the Seven Sacred Teachings. Culture is at the center of the work we do and is identified as an important determinant of health and wellbeing. We work to enhance service coordination across systems and deliver culturally safe services to create a pathway toward healing and wellness for First Nation communities. We invite you to visit our website for more info about how we express our Code of Ethics: kenorachiefs.org.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



MEMBERSHIP

- Chief Lorraine Cobiness/Proxy Councillor Leanne Cobiness - Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation
- Chief Chris Skead - Wauzhushk Onigum Nation
- Chief Roland (Rollie) Fisher - Wabaseemoong Independent Nations
- Chief Calvin Joseph - Naotkamegwanning First Nation
- Chief Darlene Comegan - Northwest Angle #33 First Nation
- Chief Herb Green - Shoal Lake #40 First Nation
- Chief Sherry Ackabee - Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek
- Chief Dolores Sinclair - Washagamis Bay First Nation

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MESSAGE

The 2025-2026 year was marked by significant transitions, and milestones at Ogimaawabiitong - Kenora Chiefs Advisory.

I'd like to acknowledge Shawanoong Banaise'Seek, our Grandmother Drum, our sacred items, helping spirits, the guidance of our Youth and Elder advisory councils, and of course, my fellow leadership, and staff for their direction and hard work providing care across all of our programs and services. I've spent over a decade as a member of KCA's Board Executive and strongly believe in the organization's heart: building upon the strengths in our respective communities, and through partnerships creating spaces of healing and wellness outside our communities that our members can safely access and find belonging.

I can't begin to capture our year without first acknowledging the passing of KCA's beloved Board President, the late Lorraine Cobiness. KCA was honored to stand with her family, friends, and community of Niisaachewan during her transition. We reflect on her influence and teachings as we carry forward in our collective work together.

Ogimaawabiitong is happy to welcome new Chiefs to the Board of Directors from across several affiliated First Nations, including Naotkamegwanning, Washagamis Bay, Niisaachewan, Wabaseemoong, and Shoal Lake #40.

The strengths and gifts that each new leader brings with them drive a renewed momentum to the ongoing initiatives here. Miigwech and welcome to Chiefs Joseph, Sinclair, Jameson, Fisher and Green. Our entire leadership team and staff welcome and thank you for your time and commitment to Ogimaawabiitong.

I'd like to congratulate KCA for its accomplishment in being "Accredited with Commendation" resulting from the Accreditation Site Survey in July 2025. Since we began the work of aspiring to 'excellence in all that we do' back in 2016, each accreditation cycle has seen marked improvement in the organization's standards and practices. Accreditation is only one tool KCA uses to ensure the best possible care in our communities.

I'm pleased to highlight the incredible year of growth and connection experienced by so many children, youth, and families who participate in the offerings provided by the Makate Waagamichiwanang Gakinaa' amaatiwin Youth and Family Wellness Camp. I encourage everyone to view the Youth & Family Wellness Camp's Annual Impact Report, which is shared alongside KCA's Annual Report.

Finally, this year marks significant advancement in Ogimaawabiitong's partnership in the All Nations Hospital Project, and our lead role in developing the Campus of Care. Our decision the year prior to purchase properties on Lakeview Drive in Kenora (totaling 126 acres) is not taken lightly - we made the decision with seven generations ahead in mind. We spent this year formalizing the joint hospital planning structure and organized together alongside Lake of the Woods District Hospital and the City of Kenora in the next phase of advanced planning.

I extend gratitude to membership across our communities, clients we serve, and all those who contribute and work alongside us.

- Chief Chris Skead,
Acting Board President

IN LOVING MEMORY



Chief Lorraine Cobiness, Board President
Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation
Board of Directors, 2008-2025

Lorraine served on the Board of Directors of KCA in conjunction with her first term as Chief in 2008. Lorraine was deeply instrumental in all aspects of growth and development of the organization. She gave all of us a deep sense of purpose behind our work, a strong vision, as well as discipline and high standards. She always demanded the best from KCA for the people and communities we serve. Her steady presence brought out the best in the leadership team. Lorraine gave countless hours of her time to mentoring and guiding the organization and its executive team over the years. Lorraine believed in the possibility of creating a better and safer world for future generations and improving the lives of everyone around her.
We will continue to reflect on her wisdom and enormous impact as we move forward together.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

I am honoured to contribute my remarks for Kenora Chiefs Advisory's 2025-2026 Annual Report.

This year was remarkably challenging, as the organization navigated a roll back in funding previously committed to First Nation children from across 12 affiliated communities we serve via Jordan's Principle. Our organization's experience is one of many experiences felt by families, communities, and organizations across the territories. Overall, KCA saw a reduction in approximately $3M in funding towards direct care no longer eligible based on new provisions communicated by Indigenous Services Canada. In response to this destabilization in investment to First Nation children, KCA with the support of the Board of Directors, initiated a strategic restructuring.

I would like to thank the Niigaanning Bimaadiziwin Development Services team, Child and Youth Mental Health team, our entire senior management team, and all staff for your patience, support and resilience. Through the restructuring, we collapsed our management and administrative staffing structure by more than half the number of staff. I acknowledge everyone directly impacted: coworkers, colleagues, and your families. I'm happy to share that where possible, we welcomed existing staff into new roles where funding could support filling critical vacancies, and best honour people's gifts and strengths.

KCA remains unequivocally committed to ongoing program development and deepening the care we provide in the areas of children's developmental, pediatric, and mental health and addictions services across the lifespan. We continue to rebuild and look to ongoing conversations as we problem solve gaps in care, alongside government partners at both the provincial and federal levels.

In the balance of all things, the organization reports on incredible accomplishments this year which are outlined below and expanded upon in our report.

- KCA was awarded a Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub Indigenous-led pilot, in collaboration with a cohort of important mental health and addiction sector Partner organizations on behalf of the Kenora and surrounding area. KCA acts in the role of fundholder, provides 'backbone' project management support, and offers a compliment of addiction-focused case management and therapeutic positions specific to supporting First Nations members.

- Launch of KCA's Pediatric Program in Spring 2025, focusing on building capacity and direct access to pediatric care across eight (8) First Nations. Miigwech to Dr. Kayla Edison and Dr. Amy Lam for your care and leadership!

- Creation and launch of the Emergency Capacity Building Education Program led by KCA's Social Emergency Manager. This program offers practical skills and relationship building with First Nation community staff.

Times of adversity certainly encourage reflection upon who we are, and the responsibilities we uphold as an organization and collective.

I look forward to sharing our Strategic Plan next year, hearing from community, clients, staff and leadership across First Nations. I look forward to returning next year to report on our ever-evolving journey together.

- Jennifer Dreaver, Executive Director

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE - ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

This year marked a milestone in KCA's Accreditation journey. We completed another four-year cycle with a site visit from Accreditation Canada surveyors in July 2025. I'm pleased to report that out of this year's survey, KCA increased its standing as a "Centre of Service Excellence." Prior to this year, KCA's administrative offices located in Kenora were our only accredited site. Now, we welcome on board the Kenora Youth Wellness Hub, and Binesi Waziswon, an eight-bed children's residential treatment home as part of our accredited portfolio. We are now Accredited with Commendation, meaning "the organization has surpassed the fundamental requirements of the accreditation program." At a program level, Primary Care's complement of clinical programs joined our list of Accredited programs.

An excerpt from Accreditation Canada's review report shares that, "KCA demonstrates a deeply embedded commitment to people centered care, grounded in Indigenous values, self-determination, and community leadership. A defining strength of KCA is its governance structure, where Chiefs and affiliated First Nations sit at the leadership table, as well as the active Youth and Elders Councils. This ensures that health services are not only accountable to communities but are also shaped by direct, lived insight from the communities they serve."

KCA staff were also commended for their dedication to advancing the organization and its service delivery in First Nation communities:

"The team working on the standards are well educated in what the standard is getting at and ways to address it. There is enthusiasm about what they are doing and good cross communication between them. They are respected by the community and are sought after partners."

Some of our work throughout the last cycle included developing an Operational Plan, and early design of a Quality Improvement framework, which contributed to our strong outcome. KCA's Human Resource team launched a new, improved system for incident reporting across the organization. A full-scale review and key updates of our Finance, Personnel and Program policies and procedures was completed. We now have robust, accessible, and user-friendly policies and procedures to guide staff and managers in their work. This better supports our over 200 employees, maintaining our strong foundation of service delivery and strengthening overall operations.

As we look ahead, our focus will be on continued learning and development work in the areas of Quality Improvement and program level policies and procedures.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside the amazing KCA team as we move through our next four-year cycle.

- Vanessa Lucky,
Organizational Excellence Officer



ADVISORY COUNCILS

KCA has two interconnected advisory councils that provide key guidance on advancing strategic and operational goals and directives.

They also support organizational initiatives and share input on proposal development and special projects.

Council members ensure that our work is culturally safe, leveraging both their lived experience and community-based knowledge.

The councils comprise representatives from each of the affiliated First Nation communities that KCA serves.

These representatives are ultimately appointed by the Chiefs of their First Nations, with an open recruitment process based on interest.

Additional criteria for membership are outlined in the respective council's terms of reference.







YOUTH COUNCIL

The Youth Council is a youth-led advisory body that provides a platform for Indigenous youth from Treaty #3 communities to strengthen their voices, build leadership skills, and take an active role in decision-making processes that shape their communities.

Grounded in Anishinaabe teachings, community connection, and cultural identity, the Youth Council works to create meaningful opportunities for leadership, advocacy, and wellness. Members are encouraged to guide initiatives, inform programming, and support youth across the region in ways that reflect their strengths, values, and lived experiences.

The council works closely with KCA departments, community partners, and leadership to advance youth priorities, support cultural and wellness events, and build inclusive spaces where youth feel heard, valued, and empowered.

Membership

Chloe Skead - Wauzhushk Onigum Nation
Lexx Paul - Asubpeeschoseewagong First Nation
Chayne (Shy) Loon - Asubpeeschoseewagong First Nation
Avery Bunting - Wabaseemoong Independent Nations
Mariah White - Naotkamegwanning First Nation
Isaiah Paul - Northwest Angle #33 First Nation
Damon Sandy - Northwest Angle #33 First Nation
Avery Meekis - Shoal Lake #40 First Nation
Stephen Paypom - Washagamis Bay First Nation
Rachael Cameron - Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation

Alternate vacancies in Niisaachewan, Wabaseemoong, Washagamis Bay, Shoal Lake #40, Naotkamegwanning, and Northwest Angle #33



YOUTH COUNCIL



Youth Council Code of Ethics

“As long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers and lakes flow…”

We are the next generation of Treaty #3 Anishinaabe - grounded in our teachings, guided by our Knowledge Keepers, and connected to the land and spirit.

As members of the KCA Youth Council, we commit to living and leading by the Seven Grandfather Teachings, which guide how we treat ourselves, each other, and our communities.

This shared code of ethics reflects the Council’s foundation: leadership rooted in culture and accountability to community.

- Excerpt from April 2025 Youth Council Strategic Planning Meeting

Highlights

In February 2026, five KCA staff and three Youth Council members attended the “She Is Wise” conference in Ottawa. The conference provided valuable learning opportunities focused on changing the narrative of violence against women through teachings and wisdom of Grandmothers, Mothers, Aunties, and Daughters. These teachings reinforced the importance of nurturing strong families and communities and provided knowledge that staff can incorporate into their ongoing work with youth.

Youth Council members participated in cultural, leadership, and gender empowerment sessions that supported personal growth, strengthened their confidence, and enhanced their ability to serve as positive role models and advocates within their communities. The experience fostered meaningful learning, cultural connection, and leadership development for both staff and youth participants.

ELDERS COUNCIL



The leadership and wisdom of our Elders guide the work Kenora Chiefs Advisory does.

Our Elders are knowledge carriers, bringing traditional responsibilities that they carry, as well as lived experience to guide and direct our work.

The Elders Council provide support and guidance, cultural teachings, and ceremonial practices to the organization’s staff, programs, and activities.

The Council meets monthly, not including their role in observing our seasonal feasting ceremonies.

ELDERS COUNCIL



Membership

Allan White, Organization Elder - Naotkamegwanning First Nation

Andy White - Naotkamegwanning First Nation

George Land - Wabaseemoong Independent Nations

Agnes Paul - Northwest Angle #33 First Nation

Merv Copenance - Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation

Gwen Redsky - Shoal Lake #40 First Nation

Luanne Kavanaugh - Animakee Wa Zhing #37 First Nation

Ida Skead - Wauzhushk Onigum Nation

Vacant - Asubpeeschoseewagong First Nation

Vacant - Washagamis Bay First Nation

Members of our Elders Council supported cultural orientations, the “Healing Your Spirit Pow-Wow,” traditional medicine gathering, feasts, ceremonies, and community gatherings.

They also provided guidance and support for:

45 events
50 ceremonies
40 workshops
55 meetings

SHAWANOONG BANAISE'SEEK

"KOHKUM DRUM"



Shawanoong Banaise'Seek is a Grandmother/Kohkom Drum. Her name means South Eagle Woman.

Shawanoong Banaise'Seek is revered and serves as a foundation for Ogimaawabiitong. She offers guidance and protection to all present within the organization's sphere, and she creates a safe and respectful space.

She is a sacred conduit connecting all participants to helping spirits that guide our work through Ogimaawabiitong. By being part of gatherings and ceremonies, the drum fosters unity, safety, and spiritual balance among all attendees.

She embodies the spirit of protection, clarity, and togetherness - reminding us of our shared responsibilities to each other and to all Creation.



HUMAN RESOURCES

This year, the Human Resources team focused on strengthening organizational capacity, supporting employee wellbeing, and creating consistent people-centered practices across KCA.

A key priority was streamlining and standardizing recruitment processes to ensure KCA continues to attract and retain qualified employees while positioning itself as an employer of choice. This included the successful coordination of approximately 40 summer student hires across multiple programs. Through enhanced planning, standardized hiring processes, and increased collaboration with managers, the summer student recruitment process was completed more efficiently while maintaining a positive experience for hiring managers and applicants.

The department also continued its work to support leaders in hiring the right people for the right roles. By strengthening recruitment practices, interview processes, and manager support, Human Resources is helping build a workforce that aligns with KCA's values, culture, and long-term organizational needs.

Significant progress was also made in Occupational Health and Safety, with a focus on standardizing practices, documentation, and expectations across KCA worksites. The implementation of a new incident reporting and tracking platform further strengthened KCA's ability to monitor trends, track corrective actions, and use data to proactively support safer workplaces.

Employee wellness remained a priority throughout the year. The Wellness Committee continued to lead initiatives designed to promote employee engagement, connection, and wellbeing. Through wellness activities, awareness campaigns, and staff-focused events, the committee helped foster a positive workplace culture and encouraged employees to prioritize their physical, mental, emotional, and cultural wellness.

The committee also continued working toward representation from all programs and departments, ensuring that employees have a voice in wellness initiatives and that activities reflect the diverse needs and perspectives of staff throughout the organization.





HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources and Finance departments also strengthened their partnership to improve employee service delivery and operational efficiency.

This collaboration led to the development and implementation of a new Payroll and Benefits Advisor position, creating a more integrated approach to supporting employees with payroll, benefits, and related inquiries while enhancing service consistency across departments.

Another key focus was empowering managers through training, coaching, and capacity-building initiatives.

By providing leaders with practical tools, resources, and ongoing support, Human Resources continues to strengthen leadership capability across the organization.

These efforts help managers navigate employee relations matters, support team development, and create positive, accountable workplace environments.

As KCA continues to grow, Human Resources remains committed to building a strong workforce, supporting employee wellbeing, and ensuring that our people practices reflect the organization's mission, values, and commitment to serving our affiliated communities.



FINANCIAL REPORT

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at March 31, 2026

Assets	2026	2025
Current		
Cash	1,334,923	2,619,533
Accounts Receivable (Note 3)	4,898,180	2,413,539
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	25,984	-
	6,259,087	5,033,072
Capital Assets (Note 4)	23,266,037	18,658,198
Due from Wiigwas Elder and Senior Care (Note 5)	935,251	2,220,938
	30,460,375	25,912,208
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts Payable and Accruals (Note 7)	6,335,789	5,664,821
Deferred Contributions (Note 8)	2,214,637	922,287
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt (Note 10)	497,980	1,789,856
	9,048,406	8,376,964
Long-Term Debt (Note 10)	3,718,970	3,464,177
Deferred Contributions Related to Capital Assets (Note 9)	9,599,567	4,811,417
	13,318,537	8,275,594
	22,366,943	16,652,558
Net Assets		
Unrestricted (Note 12)	(1,356,088)	666,902
Invest in Capital Assets	9,449,520	8,592,748
	8,093,432	9,259,650
	30,460,375	25,912,208

FINANCIAL REPORT

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS for the year ended March 31, 2026

	2026	2025
Revenue		
Province of Ontario	23,970,354	18,546,635
Indigenous Services Canada	8,559,703	11,153,358
Youth and Family Wellness Camp	2,353,120	-
Other revenue	2,433,530	4,325,270
All Nations Health Partnership	1,908,503	-
Own source revenue	1,090,219	884,733
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health	967,653	702,201
Jays Care Foundations	432,458	-
Sponsorship	314,737	246,656
Department of Justice Canada	200,244	55,000
All Nations Hospital Project	189,044	-
Ministry of Canadian Heritage	162,573	119,550
Grand Council Treaty #3	100,000	-
Bell Mental Health	50,000	-
Northern Ontario Heritage Fund	15,000	-
Deferred from prior year	922,287	349,212
Deferred to subsequent year	(2,164,637)	(922,287)
Surplus repayable	(1,403,058)	(52,190)
	40,101,730	35,408,138
Expenses		
Administrative	562	-
Advertising	138,178	150,623
Amortization	630,740	726,410
Bank charges and interest	7,746	229,047
Computer	317,942	46,578
Contracted services	2,821,143	980,179
Donations	131,307	168,360
Honoraria	653,509	691,601
Insurance	337,994	293,853
Interest on long-term debt	316,426	-
Office supplies	165,224	89,682
Professional development	323,629	216,129
Professional fees	2,185,406	1,537,916
Property tax	133,303	98,890
Rent	436,075	493,355
Repairs and maintenance	570,941	373,593
Salaries and benefits	22,302,714	20,862,626
Supplies	2,698,606	2,849,532
Telephone	212,018	233,301
Travel	2,775,672	1,732,472
	37,159,135	31,774,147
Community payments	**4,108,813**	**4,030,276**
Total expenses	**41,267,948**	**35,804,423**
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	**(1,166,218)**	**(396,285)**

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MESSAGE

While 2025-26 provided its challenges through the roll back of Jordan's Principle funding, it proved the resiliency of Kenora Chiefs Advisory and our staff across the organization.

Overall, KCA's deficit for 2025-26 was $1.16M. Given the $3M reduction in our Jordan's Principle funding and the approvals not being provided by Indigenous Services Canada until January 2026, the senior management team, with the support of the Board of Directors, was able to make the necessary adjustments early enough to mitigate the full effect of the reduced funding. Additions of other funding sources, such as the HART Hub, Kenora CARE Unit, and Emergency Readiness and Capacity Building programs, also helped to reduce this deficit and maintain capacity.

KCA's resiliency was illustrated through its ability to increase gross revenue by roughly $4.7M from the 2024-25 fiscal year.

This means that our communities and members are benefitting from increased care and services carried out by our staff.

Although we believe that the financial pressures felt in 2025-26 will be temporary, our senior management team has taken this as an opportunity to identify other potential vulnerabilities across our programs and further increase operational efficiency. This will be an ongoing focus throughout 2026-27 and beyond.

From an equity perspective, this deficit reduced our net asset position from $9.26M to $8.09M, with the entirety of this balance being invested in capital assets. KCA's decision to purchase the properties where the All Nations Hospital and Campus of Care will be developed came from a position of strength with a long-term vision in mind. We expect these investments to serve as a source of prosperity for our members, our communities, our partners, and our organization for years to come.

The coming years will bring significant change and growth for Kenora Chiefs Advisory. I look forward to continuing this journey with the great team that we have built.

- Colt German, Chief Financial Officer




Ihaawanoong
Memengwaa Kwe

STRATEGY AND INNOVATION

Highlight: Kenora Indigenous-Led Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub

This year, the Ministry of Health provided $4,966,683 in one-time operating funding to establish the Kenora Indigenous-led HART Hub.

This local initiative brings together the Canadian Mental Health Association-Kenora Branch (CMHAK), Kenora Association of Community Living (KACL), Kenora District Services Board (KDSB), and Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe 'iyewigamig Health Access Centre (WNHAC).

Each partner organization delivers a component of the HART Hub model. The aim is to increase access to supportive housing beds with the establishment of 15 net new beds delivered by WNHAC, as well as better coordinate care for shared clients served by the organizations.

Each organization co-developed the budget investment and sought to address key strategic goals in service delivery, playing on each organization's strengths.

The main site of the HART Hub is co-located with the Kenora Emergency Shelter downtown. The HART Hub began regular service reporting to Ontario Health in September 2025.

The group has purchased a digital enabler called Careteam Technologies, a care-planning tool that brings together frontline case management and clinical staff.

In addition, through the HART Hub initiative, Kenora Chiefs Advisory in partnership with Wabaseemoong Independent Nations took on the operation of the community's shelter called Safe Haven. The Safe Haven Shelter served 90 unique clients across 772 recorded days of attendance.

New Funding Summary

- Ministry of Health: $4,966,683 in one-time operating funding to establish the Kenora Indigenous-led HART Hub.
- Ministry of Health: $163,000 in one-time Ontario Intensive Treatment Pathway funding for Binesi Waziswon (Step Up Step Down Program), approved January 2026.
- Ministry of the Solicitor General: up to $791,540 over three years for the Skaabe Mentorship Program, March 2026 in partnership with Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin located on Bug Lake, and KCA's Cultural staff.
- Ministry of Health: one-time funding to transition the Behavioural Health department over to a new Electronic Medical Record, one of four provincially recognized platforms that make reporting streamlined. The EMR of choice was EMHware.
- Awarded $700,000 for a multi-year grant in partnership with Prosper Canada under their Resilient Futures Initiative to extend financial literacy supports delivered through the Min-O-Qwe-Ke-Ga-Bwe'in Social Services Initiative Program (MSSI).

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Every child has the right to identity (anishinabewin), language (anishinaabemowin), and traditional healing (miinigoosiwin) that nurture pride and belonging.

They hold the right to a good life (minobimaatiziwin), rooted in the land (Anishinaabe akiig) and supported by a healthy lifestyle (anishinaabechigewin).

Education (kinamaatiwin), spiritual name (Anishinaabe ishinikaasowin), and clan (ododemun) connections strengthen their sense of purpose.

Above all, Anishinaabe children have the right to protection, family (gutsiimuh), and a life of balance, wellness, and cultural strength.

- Shared by Jolene Fontaine, Anishinaabe Cultural Liaison

Treaty Day 2026
Wauzhushk Onigum Nation

CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CYMH)



CYMH provides culturally safe, trauma-informed and strength-based case management and therapeutic supports to children, youth, and families from affiliated First Nations we serve. Through a holistic approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being, programming focuses on promoting healing, connecting, and building cultural identity, positive self-esteem, belonging, and care planning for wellness.

Additional components of this service may include advocating alongside client and families in relation to the justice and education systems, service navigation, low barrier outreach, specific support for post-majority youth transitioning from the child welfare system, support with accessing different types of treatment and specialized assessments, and education and awareness building in First Nation communities impacted by human trafficking. Staff work alongside individuals and families to identify strengths, assess needs, develop goals, and connect them to specific or specialized services.

CYMH staff seek to build trusting relationships, creating meaningful opportunities for engagement while connecting individuals to culture, ceremony, and traditional teachings as pathways to healing and wellness. Through strong collaboration with community partners and service providers, CYMH ensures individuals receive coordinated, wraparound supports that empower them to overcome challenges, strengthen their well-being, and achieve their personal goals.

YOUTH OUTREACH WORKER (YOW)
YOUTH IN TRANSITION (YIT)

The Youth Outreach Worker program supports youth wellness, leadership, and cultural connection across affiliated First Nations KCA serves. This year, the program strengthened its presence through school-based initiatives, community events, and culturally grounded programming, reaching over 200 youth and 300 community members, including parents and caregivers.

Through partnerships with the Lake of the Woods Wrestling Club, Coach and KCA Youth Outreach Worker Kyle Garner, and Dunit Contracting, the Try Wrestling Initiative launched in the Fall of 2025 through the YOW Program. This initiative brings culturally grounded sport programming directly to youth, where access to organized recreation is often limited by distance, transportation, cost, and seasonal barriers.

Through structured wrestling sessions delivered in First Nations, youth build confidence, emotional regulation, focus, resilience, respect, and self-control. Kyle Garner incorporates the Seven Grandfather Teachings into each session, connecting wrestling with values such as respect, honesty, courage, humility, and integrity.

During our Youth Outreach Program Awareness Days, 10 youth from Grassy Narrows and 15 youth from Naotkamegwanning participated in the Try Wrestling Initiative.

The Youth in Transition (YIT) program supports youth currently in care or transitioning out of care of child welfare systems, providing guidance, practical life skills, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. The program focuses on fostering independence, confidence, and community engagement, while promoting cultural identity and wellness.

Thirty youth were supported by this program this year.

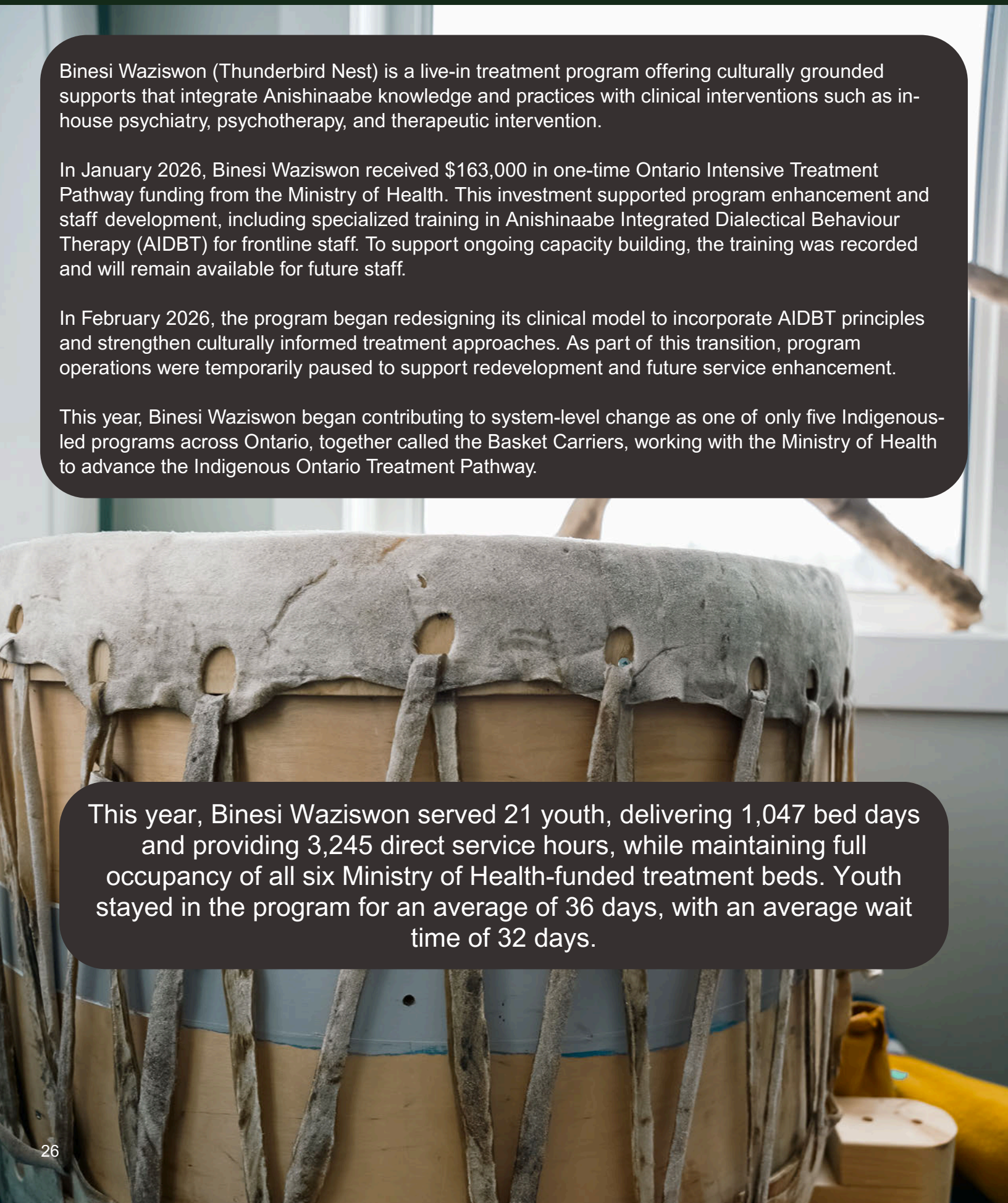








BINESI WAZISWON (STEP UP-STEP DOWN)



Binesi Waziswon (Thunderbird Nest) is a live-in treatment program offering culturally grounded supports that integrate Anishinaabe knowledge and practices with clinical interventions such as in-house psychiatry, psychotherapy, and therapeutic intervention.

In January 2026, Binesi Waziswon received $163,000 in one-time Ontario Intensive Treatment Pathway funding from the Ministry of Health. This investment supported program enhancement and staff development, including specialized training in Anishinaabe Integrated Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (AIDBT) for frontline staff. To support ongoing capacity building, the training was recorded and will remain available for future staff.

In February 2026, the program began redesigning its clinical model to incorporate AIDBT principles and strengthen culturally informed treatment approaches. As part of this transition, program operations were temporarily paused to support redevelopment and future service enhancement.

This year, Binesi Waziswon began contributing to system-level change as one of only five Indigenous-led programs across Ontario, together called the Basket Carriers, working with the Ministry of Health to advance the Indigenous Ontario Treatment Pathway.

This year, Binesi Waziswon served 21 youth, delivering 1,047 bed days and providing 3,245 direct service hours, while maintaining full occupancy of all six Ministry of Health-funded treatment beds. Youth stayed in the program for an average of 36 days, with an average wait time of 32 days.

BINESI WAZISWON
(STEP UP-STEP DOWN)



Client Testimonials

"I went to Binesi to better my mental health and my addiction with AOD. Being at Binesi made me realize life is beautiful and we can get through it. What helped me most at Binesi is the people around me and the support that was given when needed. The staff and the amount of activities and routine to follow is one of the main structures that kept me in shape. What I learned and liked being at Binesi was how much I was being heard and helped within the first few days. The counsellors, youth workers, and schoolteacher are the most supportive and helpful people you can meet."

"I went to Binesi to figure myself out more and to heal from past experiences. It has helped me in many ways, like to challenge my anxiety, to be more open with people, and to try new things. I liked how there was always something to do, like arts and crafts, going for walks or just talking with people that were there. I mostly liked all of the staff that were there and didn't have any problems with any of them. What helped was the counselling that was offered to me and the feeling of being understood and accepted for who I am."

ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM

Key Highlights
33 individuals supported

This year, AHT hosted
8 Empower Her sessions
and attended 3 conferences
to collaborate with
regional partners

Empower Her Event
Approx. 100 participants

Empower Her Group Sessions:
Approximately 40-50 youth
across 8 biweekly sessions

The Anti-Human Trafficking (AHT) Program is dedicated to empowering youth and communities through education, awareness, and engagement initiatives that address human trafficking, personal safety, healthy relationships, and gender-based violence. There are two AHT Coordinators and AHT/YIT hybrid position within this program.

In May 2025, KCA proudly hosted the inaugural Empower Her Conference, bringing together women from across Treaty #3 for a day of connection, healing, learning, and empowerment. Led by the Anti-Human Trafficking Team, the conference created a meaningful space where community members, service providers, and clients could strengthen relationships, deepen their understanding of human trafficking, explore healthy coping strategies, and share stories of resilience and hope.

Elder Ruth Skead guided the opening and closing ceremonies, while the Binesiikwe Singers of Manitoba provided powerful cultural teachings and a welcoming atmosphere that fostered inclusion, connection, and a sense of belonging among participants.

Participant feedback highlighted the conference's success in creating a safe and supportive environment where people could learn from one another, build connections, and share lived experiences. The event balanced education with laughter, cultural teachings, healing, and meaningful discussion, leaving attendees feeling empowered, hopeful, and motivated to pursue positive change.

KCA extends a sincere Miigwetch to all partners and supporters who contributed to the success of the conference, including Elder Ruth Skead, the Binesiikwe Singers, Kenora Sexual Assault Centre, Victim Services of Kenora, Grand Council Treaty #3, the Ontario Native Women's Association, and Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong. Together, their support helped create a memorable and impactful gathering that strengthened community relationships and promoted wellness across Treaty #3.





Annual Traditional Powwow
Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation

KENORA YOUTH WELLNESS HUB

The Kenora Youth Wellness Hub is an integrated youth services site that connects youth ages 12-25 with mental, physical, social, cultural, and emotional wellness supports - termed “the right services, in the right place, at the right time.”

Key Highlights

366 youth accessed counselling and primary care supports, with 79.8% identifying as Indigenous

Food security programming provided meals/snacks to 576 youth

Annual Back-to-School BBQ distributed 110 backpacks filled with supplies to youth in Kenora and surrounding communities

Youth stepped into leadership roles by joining the Hub's Youth Advisory Council and facilitating monthly cultural programming

Launched weekly Nurse Practitioner clinics - 166 youth accessed the new service

Extended hours and programming saw 288 youth visit the Hub during the evening

This year, the Hub supported 3,336 youth with access to clinical mental health and substance use services, education supports, employment and housing supports, primary care and sexual health clinics, food programs, land-based and cultural teachings, and peer support

Client Testimonials

“The Youth Hub’s Services help me by giving me a safe space to be myself and socialize while being supported.” - Ray

“The Youth Hub has provided me with somewhere to go and spend my time, while letting me wind down and relax.” - Kennith



KENORA YOUTH WELLNESS HUB

Through the Kenora Children at Risk of Exploitation (CARE) Unit Wraparound Supports, dedicated staff (including Peer Support Workers, Mobile Outreach and Mobile Peer Support and Cultural Support Workers) provide after-hours programming, mobile outreach, peer support, and cultural and land-based healing for youth at risk of or involved in human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Some of this year's highlights include the following:

- 91% of youth engaged are Indigenous
- 72% have been identified as at risk for human trafficking
- 85% have been successfully connected to services and supports
- Significant reductions in police calls for service involving youth engaged through these supports, demonstrating the potential impact of consistent, trusted, relationship-based intervention



KENORA YOUTH WELLNESS HUB

The Youth Wellness Hub Manager also supervises two full-time Substance Use Counsellors who are co-located in the Community Justice Centre in Kenora. The Substance Use Counsellors provide higher intensity services to youth at risk. This year, the Substance Use Counsellors provided direct support to 65 clients, in which:

- 14 clients accessed treatment facilities for substance use and mental health concerns
- 38 clients were supported with treatment and housing applications
- Approximately 50% of these clients presented in crisis situations, which were successfully supported and resolved without requiring hospital involvement



Key Highlights

An average of 5 interactions per day with service providers, supporting coordinated and responsive care for clients

Supported clients accessing Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinics and primary care outreach offices on 50+ occasions

Worked directly alongside Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Youth Engagement to connect with and support young people identified as being at high risk in the community

Supported young people and their families with 70 restorative justice court days by providing advocacy, emotional support, and transportation assistance to ensure they could attend required court appearances

Overdose prevention support provided on 8+ occasions including administering Naloxone (Narcan) and contacting EMS

NIIGAANNING BIMAADIZIWIN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (NBDS)

This year's cuts to Jordan's Principle funding meant that the team had to work creatively to maintain service continuity by adjusting workloads, prioritizing essential support, strengthening partnerships with communities and clinicians, and remaining flexible in how services were delivered. Thanks to these efforts and our partnership with Firefly, NBDS continued to serve children and their families through the provision of individualized supports, holistic wraparound services, and culturally safe service delivery.

Our Anishinaabe Cultural Liaison workers held naming ceremonies in Naotkamegwanning, Wabaseemoong, Migisi Sahgaigan, Wabauskang, and Wauzhushk Onigum, supporting 6 children and youth to receive their names.

A creative approach between our Child and Youth Developmental Support Services Workers and Occupational Therapy meant this year we were able to facilitate OT Clinics in Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong after four years of their communities being without this service due to a critical vacancy.

"Recreation Therapy can play a unique role in connecting with clients. In one community, the first tim a new client to the program communicated using her words with any care provider was with the Recreation Therapist, saying "chase me!" while playing tag. This year's introduction of the "fat bike" cycling program in Washagamis Bay meant that three clients were able to take their first rides on a bicycle. Cycling is a formative skill for many children's development, and the joy of watching a child or youth taking their first successful ride is one of the most rewarding parts of my role as a recreation therapist."

Northwestern Ontario Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Clinic

The NWO FASD Clinic is supported by the Kenora Chiefs Advisory, Firefly, Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority to provide specialized services for individuals affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Its primary functions include diagnostic assessments, intervention, planning, cultural/community support, training and professional development, and advocacy and awareness.

This year, we facilitated dual assessment (FASD and Autism) in both Naotkamegwanning and Wabaseemoong, saving the families from hours of travel and associated costs. Given the demands of an intensive dual assessment, it is reasonable to assume that neither of these dual assessments would have been possible if it was not for the partnership, collaboration, and willingness of all partners and assessment teams to support the families in community.

CHILDREN'S WELLNESS AND HEALTH PROMOTION

The Anishinaabe Diabetes Education Program (ADEP) supports children, youth and their families by providing fun, hands-on sessions that offer practical and useful skills that promote healthy eating and being active in the schools and communities.

This year, the ADEP program reached 1,042 child/youth participants and supported community schools through the Northern Fruits and Vegetable Program in partnership with the NWHU.

The ADEP also partnered with the Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle and Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'lyewigamig on a youth-focused initiative called "The Waasnooden Project" with the goal of increasing diabetes awareness to youth in the Kenora region. A graphic novel was created through this initiative and is a new diabetes education tool available.



The Children's Wellness Program (CWP) supports children, youth and families in FASD awareness, child nutrition and wellness through interactive educational events and workshops including Baby Food Making, Well Baby Clinics, Sensory Play, Info sessions related to FASD and Child Development, Community and After School Kitchens. This year, the CWP reached 2456 participants and organized the "Honouring Our Gifted Children" dance special at KCA's 6th Annual Healing Your Spirit Pow-Wow. Miigwech to Callie Skead, Children's Wellness Program Coordinator for taking initiative in honouring children for their diverse gifts.



SUPPORTING ADULTS



ADULT MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Adult Mental Health and Addictions offers care coordination delivered through a case management model, to support community members struggling with mental health and/or addictions.

This service operates across eight First Nations affiliated with KCA.

The overall approach is building trust and capacity alongside individuals, connecting them to culture and ceremony.

Many times, more intense supports are required, accessing comprehensive assessment, or psychological and psychiatric consultations when necessary.

Other forms of support include helping people become treatment ready, supporting treatment applications, and aftercare as people transition back into community post-treatment.

Established dedicated client meeting space in Grassy Narrows, located at the community resource building. It has resulted in an increase in meaningful client interactions.

The service is highly mobile, but having a space in Grassy Narrows has made all the difference. Miigwetch to the community for helping us.

The team also offered consistent mental wellness support to Wauzhushk Onigum's Residential School Survivor group, through the community's Kaatagoging Initiative.

Chi-miigwetch to the survivor group members for your trust in our staff to be in your presence, listen and learn, and be with you as you processed and shared your experiences.

It has been an honour to be with you, and we carry and take with us along our own journeys everything that you have shared.



MIN-O-QWE-KE-GA-BWE'IN SOCIAL SERVICES INITIATIVE (MSSI)

The Min-O-Qwe-Ke-Ga-Bwe'in Social Services Initiative (MSSI) supports participating First Nation Ontario Works Programs through a collaborative group delivery model by providing centralized support in these key areas: Community Visits, Internal File Audits, Service Planning, Appeals Process, Policy Development, Reporting Requirements, Eligibility Review Officer, Training, Chief and Council Orientation, Risk Assessment Facilitation, Program Meetings, Emergency Support Services, Additional Supports and Facilitation as requested. Formal service agreements outline services arrangements with each First Nation.

The MSSI team provided:

26 Group meetings, Training and Program Orientation

59 Community Visits

Emergency Support Coverage 52 times during the year



Key Highlights

Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation joined MSSI

Supported Wauzhushk Onigum with its Ontario Works service planning

"We recognize that many of our people come to us in a time of crisis. Balancing policy with the best interest of our clients is our focus on the Ontario Works program.

"When we need extra support, we have always been able to call and arrange community visits with the KCA/MSSI team. MSSI is always on top of things and available when clients need assistance with applications and follow-ups."

- Leona Namaypoke, Naotkamegwanning Ontario Works Administrator

MIN-O-QWE-KE-GA-BWE'IN SOCIAL SERVICES INITIATIVE (MSSI)



The ODSP Case Management and Employment Supports Program provided individualized support to 85 clients. Services included assistance with Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) applications, Disability Determination Packages (DDPs), financial eligibility requirements, medical documentation, appeals and extensions, and referrals to Developmental Services Ontario (DSO).

Employment-related supports include employment planning, resume development, job search assistance, and connections to training and certification opportunities. The program also helped clients address practical barriers to employment, including transportation, workwear, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), identification, and driver's licensing.

Key Highlights

7-week Mino Bimaadiziwi-Miikana - "The Path to the Good Life" Employment Readiness Training Program delivered in partnership with Seven Generations Education Institute (SGEI).

Received funding from Skills Link to support client access to laptops during community-based training and workshops.

In October 2025 we Introduced the new Financial Bridges Program, designed to provide financial literacy and navigation to clients.

Strengthened partnerships through 52 community visits.

HEALTH PROMOTION

The Anishinaabe Diabetes Education Program (ADEP) supports adults living with or at risk of diabetes through education and community-based activities that promote healthy lifestyles, physical activity and self-management skills. This year, our program delivered 39 Education Sessions and Activities that had 1067 adult participants in attendance

Key Highlights

2 footcare education events held in First Nation communities

66 capacity-building activities supported First Nation community program staff

514 Screenings were done for A1c; Random Blood Glucose; Blood Pressure; Foot, Eye and Mental Health - resulting in 55 referrals

Standard First Aid and CPR provided to communities

The Gambling Addictions Awareness Program (GAAP) reached 1,696 community members across Treaty #3 through problem gambling and responsible gambling programming, such as: Gambling Addiction Support Groups, Sharing Circles, Workshops and Online Webinars, as well as a Gambling and Gaming Conference.

Key Highlights

Received funding for The Online Gambling and Gaming Project from Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (GREO), allowing us to deliver 16 workshops, host a two-day conference and training session and develop program tools and resources.

GAAP is an active member of the Casino Wellness Community Advisory committee regarding the development of a new casino in Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation.

Mental Health and Wellness Promotion provides holistic, evidence-informed, and culturally safe training and education to increase awareness of mental health and addictions, promote wellness, and build community capacity while supporting Anishinaabe ways of healing. Over the year, 104 events, training and workshops were provided to 4,168 adult participants.

COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION

The Community Reintegration Pathway Specialists are a team of two full-time staff. Together they supported 137 individuals transitioning back into the community from incarceration through culturally responsive, client centered services, focusing on mental wellness, healing, treatment planning, housing, and healthy living. Our program promotes healing, psychosocial rehabilitation, cultural identity and stability to reduce the risk of reoffending.

"The impact of Community Reintegration is often found in the moments that seem small: a person gaining confidence, making a healthy choice, finding stability, or realizing they are capable of more than they once believed. We don't just support people - we walk alongside them as they rebuild their lives. Every moment can be the beginning of a new chapter."

- Community Reintegration staff reflection

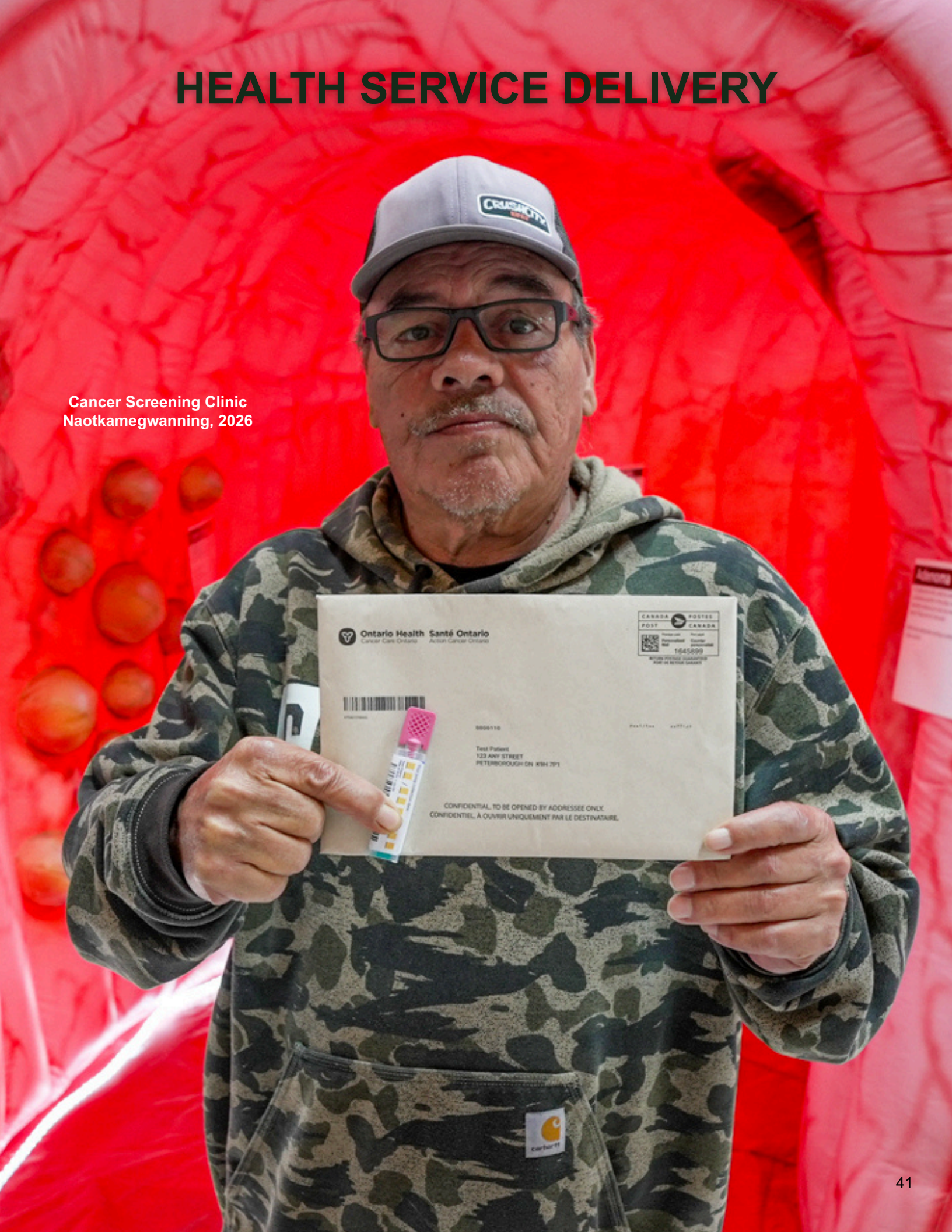






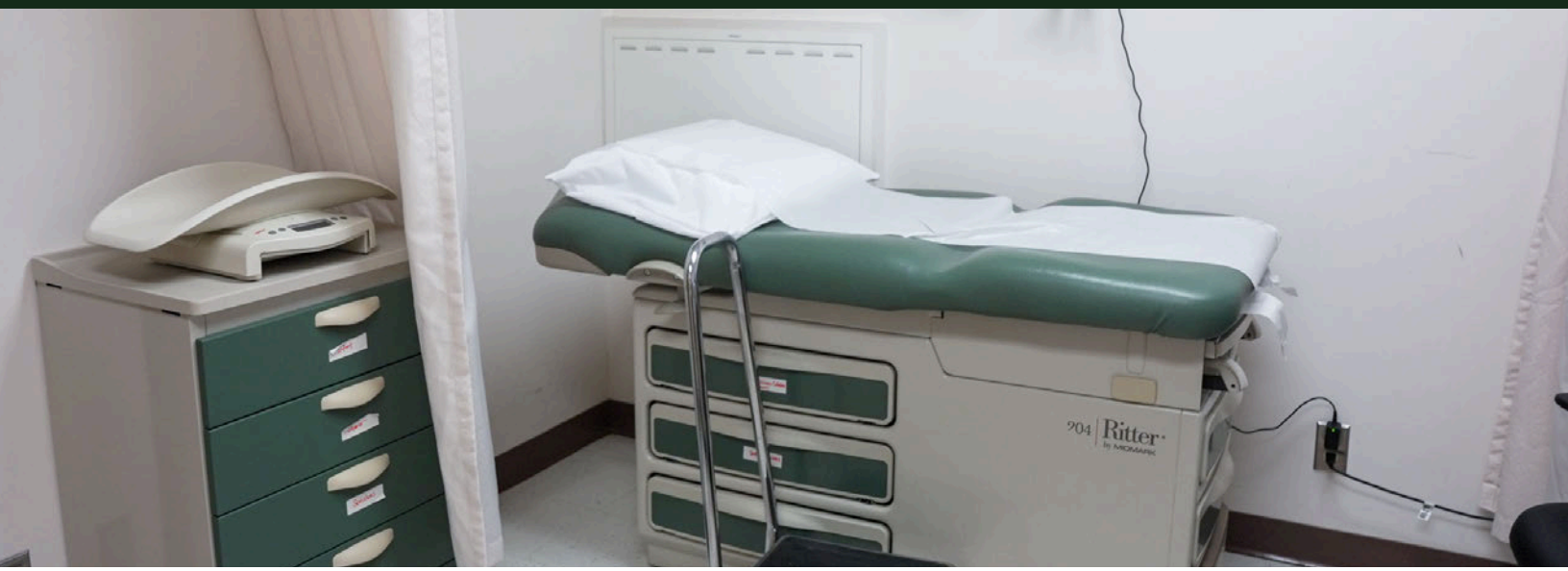


HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY



Cancer Screening Clinic
Naotkamegwanning, 2026

PRIMARY CARE



Kenora Chiefs Advisory provided primary care services across seven First Nations, in eight community sites.

We also provided Home and Community Care services across six First Nation community sites.

Provided community based nursing including immunizations where we deliver public health in communities. Chronic disease management, health promotion and clinical diabetes education are also components of care in health service delivery.

Engaged communities to guide development of a future state culturally responsive palliative care program, also referred to as “comfort care.”

Continued collaboration with communities and health system partners to strengthen access to care close to home.

This year, primary care continued to provide accessible, community-based health services across First Nations communities. Our interdisciplinary team worked collaboratively with community leadership, health staff, physicians, nurse practitioners, and community members to support access to care and improve continuity of services. The team includes Pharmacist/Clinical Diabetes Education, Dietitian Services, Foot Care Nursing, Primary Care Nursing, and Personal Support Worker Services.

These services support both prevention and management of chronic disease and provide education and direct client care. The interdisciplinary approach allows clients to access multiple areas of expertise while remaining connected to their Physician or Nurse Practitioner.

NURSING

Home and Community Care Nursing, and Personal Support Workers (PSWs)

Funded through Indigenous Services Canada, Home and Community Care provides nursing and case management services to individuals in their homes. Each community determines how Home and Community Care services are delivered based on local needs and priorities.

Nurses support clients and families with acute and chronic care, rehabilitation, health education, care planning, and ongoing support. We also deliver limited PSW staff that extend and complement home care nursing in select communities where the need is greatest. Home and Community Care services were provided across six First Nation community sites year-round.

Primary Care Nursing

Primary Care Nurses provide hands-on support and case management for individuals requiring acute and episodic care. They work closely with physicians and nurse practitioners in clinic settings and serve as an important first point of contact for community members seeking care.

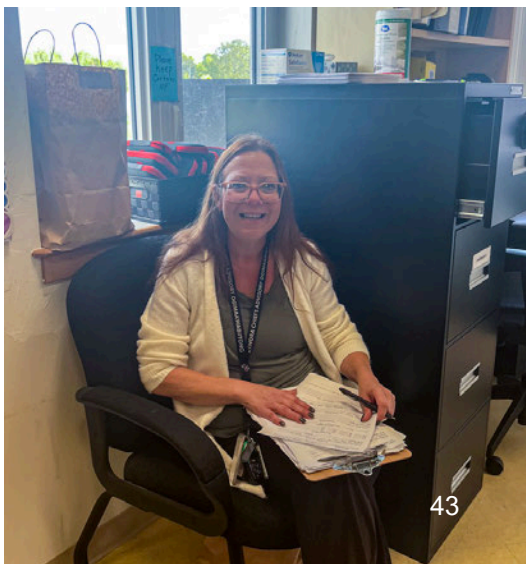
Nurses assist with assessment, follow-up, care coordination, health education, and connecting clients with appropriate services.











HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY

Community and Public Health

The Community Health and Public Health program continues to focus on health promotion, disease prevention, screening, and community wellness.

Immunizations

STI prevention, assessment and treatment
Tuberculosis treatment and follow-up
Chronic disease management

Health Promotion and Education

Screening programs - including Well Woman, Well Man and Well Baby clinics - are currently offered by Kenora Chiefs Advisory in three First Nation communities, supporting community members through prevention, early identification of health concerns, and ongoing health education.

Chronic Disease Management

We continue to advance the development of a community-based chronic disease management "Comfort Care" approach, with community engagement undertaken to better understand local priorities, needs, and expectations for palliative and end-of-life care.

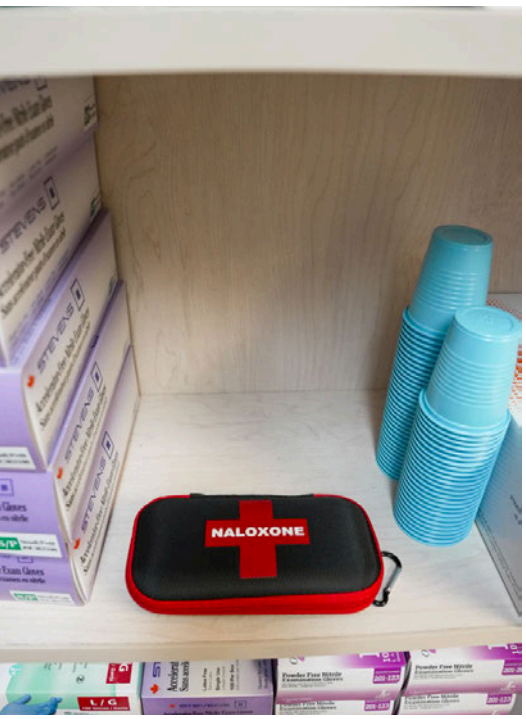
The goal of the program once fully implemented is to support First Nation community members and their families to receive compassionate, coordinated and culturally respectful comfort/palliative care as close to home as possible. Comfort care focuses not only on medical needs but also on symptom management, quality of life, emotional and family support, advance care planning, coordination of services, and supporting individuals and families through end-of-life care and bereavement.

KCA currently works collaboratively with partners across the health system to support individuals living with life-limiting illness, as well as their families. This includes coordination with primary care providers, nursing, Home and Community Care, community health services, hospitals, specialists, and other partners involved in a client's care.




EDAN




NALOXONE




STARTS
No Smoking

MEDICAL DIRECTOR MESSAGE





A major milestone this year was the completion of the work required to launch the new Rural Generalist Model on April 1, 2026.

Developed in partnership with Kenora Chiefs Advisory, Lake of the Woods District Hospital, Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig Health Access Centre, and Sunset Country Family Health Team, and through extensive collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Ontario Medical Association, the model represents an investment of approximately $28 million at maturity in sustainable rural physician services across the region.

Through the new model, KCA has been able fill its physician service allocation across seven First Nations and eight community clinic sites.

This represents an important advancement in access to consistent primary care and physician services within affiliated communities.

The model also includes ongoing First Nation-to-physician virtual on-call support when physicians are not physically present in community.

This provides nurses and nurse practitioners with timely access to physician consultation for acute concerns, helping manage issues closer to home as well as supporting community-based providers and potentially preventing unnecessary Emergency Department visits or escalation of illness.

- Dr. Jillie Retson,
Medical Director, RGC Physician Lead

RURAL GENERALIST CARE MODEL: KCA PHYSICIAN CLINICS

Asubpeeschoseewagong	Clinics
Akila Whiley	31
Kerry Anderson	27
Mandy Spencer (locum)	1
Maddie Trudeau (locum)	4
Joelle Thorgrimson (locum)	1
Dr. Nolan (locum)	1
Jennifer Wesley	2
Total:	**67**

Naotkamegwanning	Clinics
Mandy Spencer	1
Maddie Trudeau (locum)	1
Jesse Zroback (locum)	1
Jennifer Wesley	36
Jillie Retson	1
Total:	**40**

Niisaachewan	Clinics
Kerry Anderson	67
Maddie Trudeau (locum)	2
Dr. R. Brooks (locum)	2
Jennifer Wesley	2
Jillie Retson	5
Total:	**78**

Northwest Angle #33	Clinics
Angle Inlet	
Brad Kyle	14
Total:	**14**
Dog Paw	
Jennifer Wesley	17
Total:	**17**

Wabaseemoong	Clinics
Michelle Thomas	33
Mandy Spencer	11
Ronni Grimard	105
Joelle Thorgrimson (locum)	1
Jesse Zroback (locum)	2
Jonny Grek (locum)	3
Jennifer Wesley	75
Total:	**230**

Washagamis Bay	Clinics
Jonny Grek	40
Jennifer Wesley	136
Jillie Retson	2
Jesse Zroback (locum)	1
Total:	**179**

Wauzhushk Onigum	Clinics
Sandra Christie	120
Mandy Spencer	68
Maddie Trudeau (locum)	4
Joelle Thorgrimson (locum)	1
Ryan Brooks (locum)	3
Jonny Grek	9
Jennifer Wesley	4
Jillie Retson	8
Total:	**217**

CANCER CARE

First Nation Client Registry

A multi-year initiative (2024–2027) to advance the First Nation Client Registry (FNCR) and continue to raise awareness of cancer screening and traditional medicine. This includes:

Registry planning - formation of a project team, confirmed timelines with the KCA FNCR technical team, and engaged KCA leadership on governance and information-sharing protocols.

Cancer Screening Education

Community education- Continued to share culturally safe cancer screening resources at health fairs and community events.

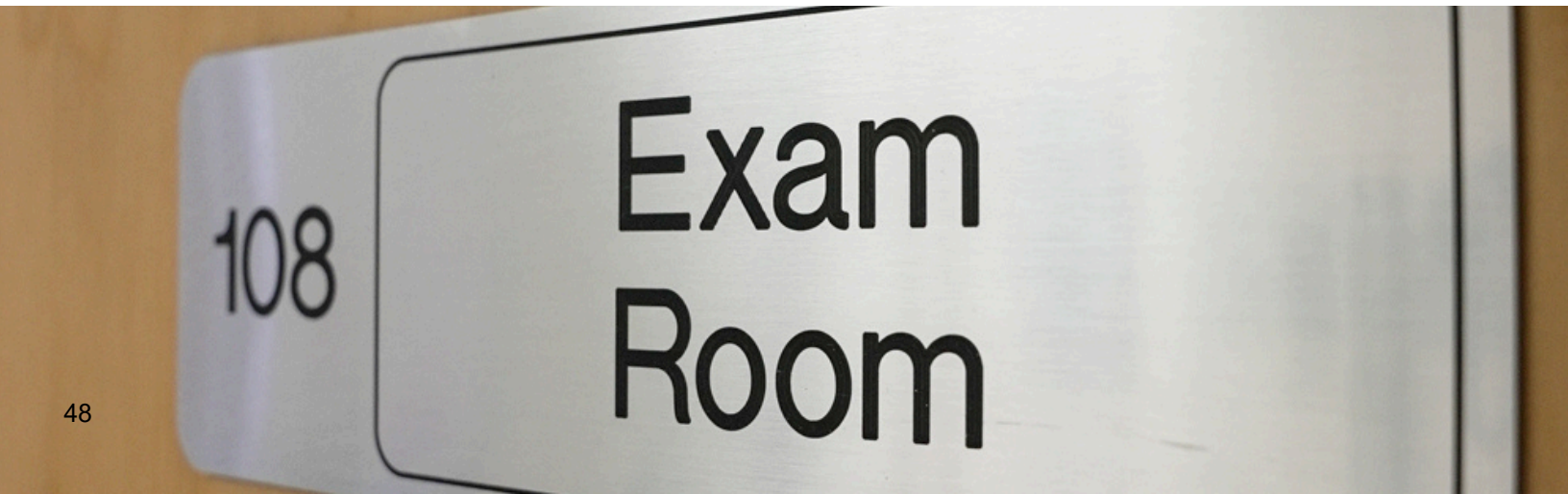
Regional coordination - Continued support to the All Nations Health Partners OHT Cancer Screening Committee to coordinate screening and prevention across First Nation communities.

Key Highlights

Began foundational planning and partner coordination to enhance the FNCR as a tool for improving programming across KCA. Early deliverables included forming a project team, confirming collaboration timelines with the KCA FNCR technical team, and engaging with KCA leadership to align on governance and information-sharing protocols.

Continue to share culturally safe resources on cancer screening through health fairs and community events.

Continue to provide support to the All Nations Health Partners OHT Cancer Screening Committee to coordinate screening and prevention initiatives across First Nation communities.



REGIONAL INDIGENOUS CANCER LEAD ACROSS TREATY #3

The RICL role provides strategic leadership. advocacy, engagement and collaboration to improve cancer prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, survivorship, palliative and end of life care for First Nations people across Treaty #3 territory.

The role works in partnership with Treaty #3 Leadership, First Nations Communities, health service providers, the Northwest Regional Cancer Program, and Ontario Health to identify and address systemic barriers to equitable care.

Highlights for 2025-2026

Supporting the Screen for Life Coach when it visited Naotkamegwanning, Wabaseemoong, and Wauzhushk Onigum in 2025. It was a team effort between community and coach staff that made the screening days successful.

Attending and involved in the organization of cancer screening clinics in Grassy Narrows and Naotkamegwanning in February and March 2026.

Attending and presenting at Grand Council Treaty #3 Health Council April 8 and 9, 2025; Sept. 16 and 17, 2025; and Jan. 20 and 21, 2026.



ANTI-RACISM AND CULTURAL SAFETY (ARCS) TRAINING

This year, 305 individuals employed by both Lake of the Woods District Hospital and Kenora Chiefs Advisory successfully completed the full ARCS training. These numbers demonstrate that we are well on our way to achieving the shared goal of seeing all hospital and KCA staff trained.

The impact of the ARCS Training is evolving beyond a training initiative, as intended. Individuals' learning and transformational personal experiences influence hundreds of daily interactions with Indigenous patients, clients, families, colleagues, and community members. We had always hoped that this "training" would support experiential and reflexive learning for all participants. We recognize that education is only one facet in being intentionally anti-racist in our daily practices within our respective institutions and community-based service delivery model.

Participant Testimonials

"The most valuable thing I learned is that you don't need to know Indigenous culture and medicine wheel to be able to help people feel more comfortable and safer in healthcare. You can just help by making their voices heard in their health plan, help them feel understood and have autonomy over their health."

"I truly will take this with me as a reminder to have patience and take time to build relationships with patients.

"As much of a difference I have made in people's lives, my Indigenous patients teach me something new each day."



CLIENT NAVIGATION

In partnership with Lake of the Woods District Hospital, Indigenous patients and families can access culturally safe, holistic Client Navigation. Language interpretation, access to cultural and healing practices in the hospital, patient advocacy, and communication and liaising with hospital staff are all at the heart of Client Navigation.

In addition, the Navigators help patients connect with plant medicines, Traditional Healers, and access to ceremonies. The Navigators are present across all patient care spaces at LWDH to create a welcoming and inclusive care environment for everyone.

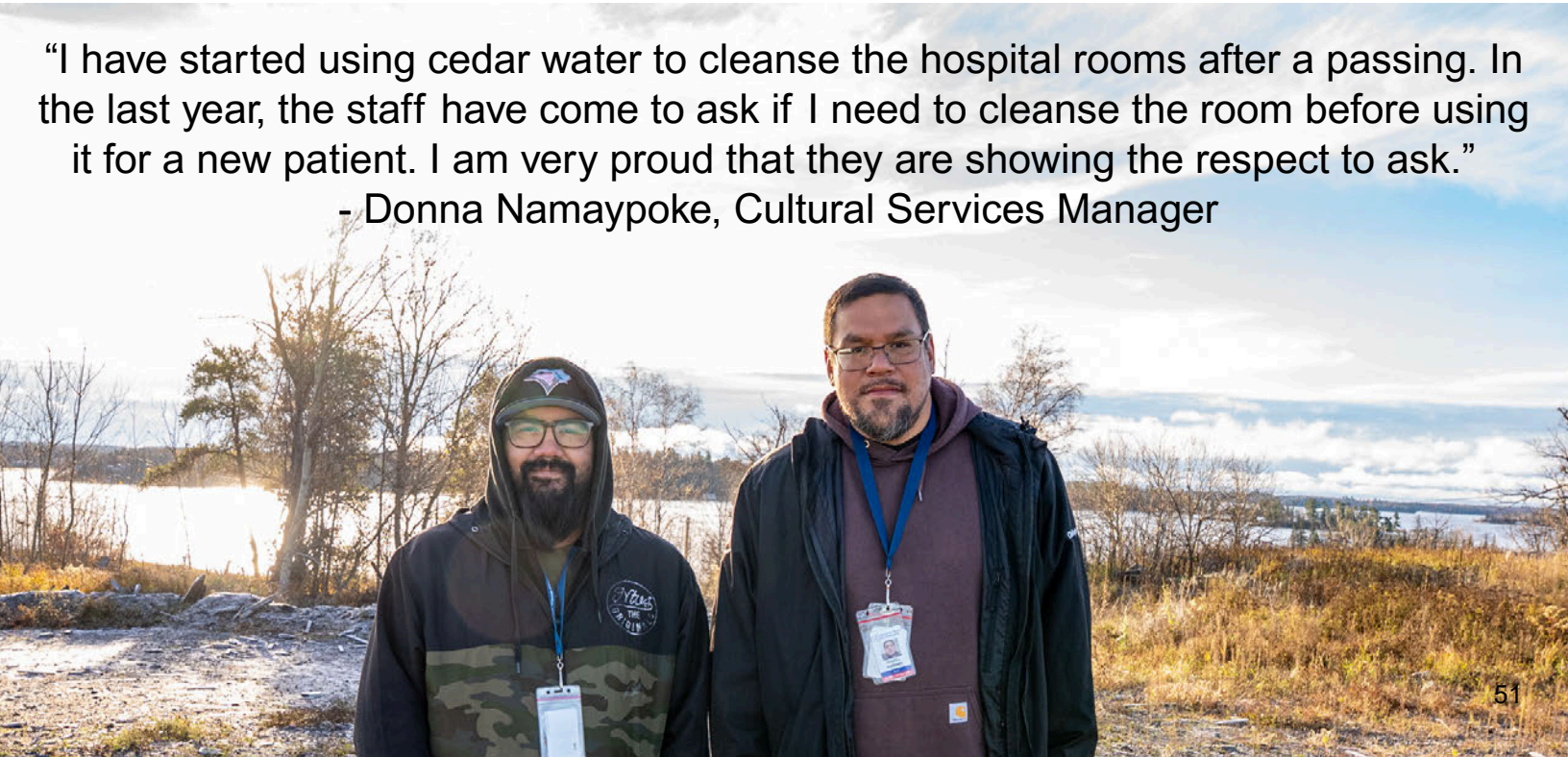
Key Highlights

Continuous work with the dialysis team and communities to ensure that patients attend their dialysis appointments with reliable transportation and that sudden or emergency appointments in Thunder Bay are responded to in a timely manner.

Patients and families have used our Ojibwe Healing Room for traditional healing and doctoring five times.

Average number of patients seen in a month is 76 between the three navigators, and that covers all hospital departments. Average number of translations in a month is 7.

"I have started using cedar water to cleanse the hospital rooms after a passing. In the last year, the staff have come to ask if I need to cleanse the room before using it for a new patient. I am very proud that they are showing the respect to ask."
- Donna Namaypoke, Cultural Services Manager



PALLIATIVE CARE CLINICAL COACH

The Coach role supports the ongoing development of high-quality, person-centered palliative and end-of-life care within our communities. The role provides clinical education, mentorship, coaching, and support to staff, helping strengthen their knowledge, confidence, and skills in providing palliative care.

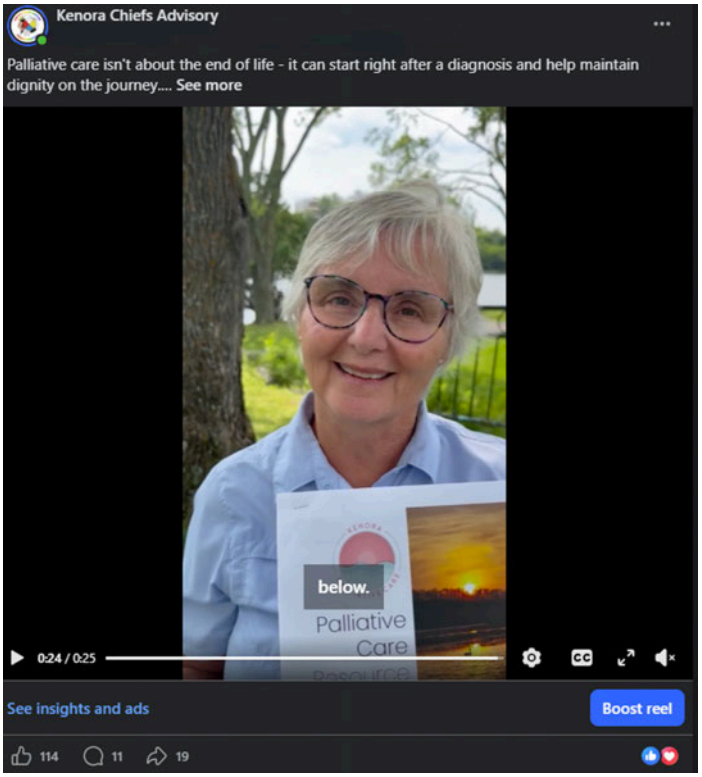
The Clinical Coach role is aligned with the Ontario Palliative Care Network and Ontario Health recommendations for palliative care, which emphasize early identification of palliative care needs, comprehensive assessment and care planning coordinated and interdisciplinary care, effective symptom management, psychosocial and spiritual support, and appropriate end-of-life care.

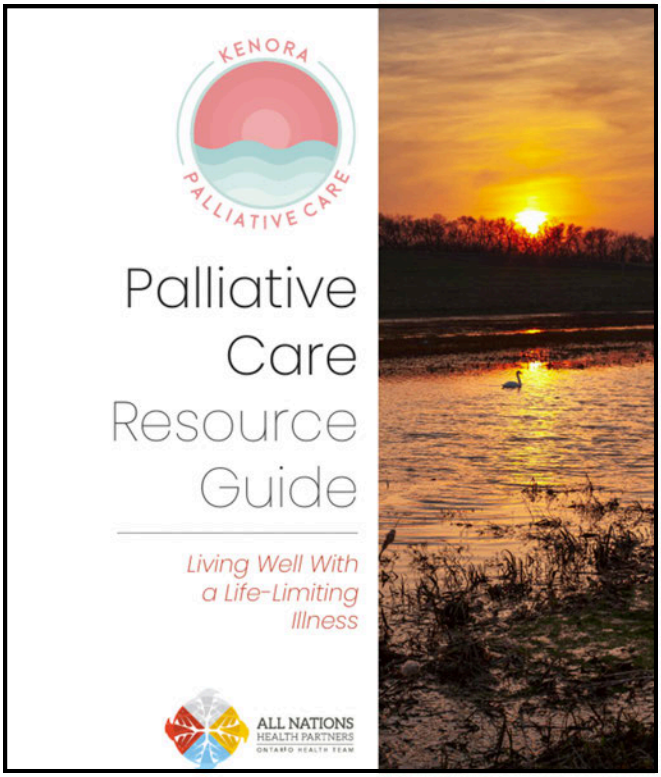
Key Highlights

Completion of community engagement toward the design of a First Nation community-based palliative “Comfort Care” program.

Participation in the local palliative care community group, with All Nation Health Partners OHT support to develop a coordinated clinical palliative care plan across the geographical area.

Education sessions on navigating difficult conversations geared toward front-line staff, leading to 25 providers and caregivers trained.





PEDIATRIC PROGRAM

In May of 2025, KCA launched its Pediatric Program with the recruitment of Dr. Kayla Edison (below left), as well as parental leave coverage from Dr. Amy Lam (below right).

The goal: to provide dedicated, culturally grounded pediatric care for children and families across communities we serve.

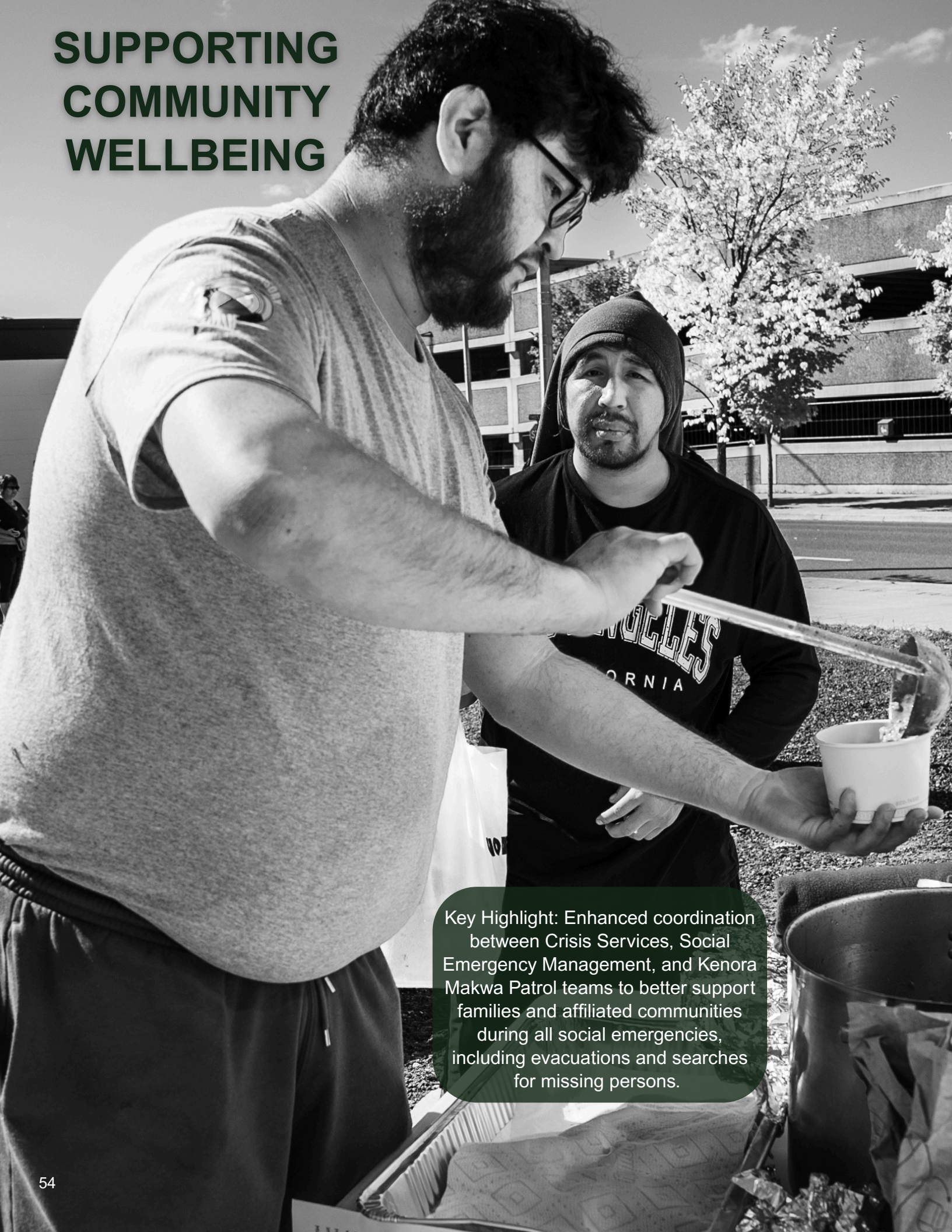
Forty-six pediatric clinics were held during the program's first year across eight First Nations.

We're building a model of care where every child in our communities can thrive close to home.





SUPPORTING COMMUNITY WELLBEING



Key Highlight: Enhanced coordination between Crisis Services, Social Emergency Management, and Kenora Makwa Patrol teams to better support families and affiliated communities during all social emergencies, including evacuations and searches for missing persons.

SOCIAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT







KCA's Social Emergency Management (SEM) is led by the Social Emergency Manager, who works tirelessly to help strengthen community readiness, support timely and organized responses to emergencies, as well as recovery efforts. Ensuring that responses are culturally safe, and community driven is central to the program's on-the-ground work, collaboration, and advocacy.

Capacity building is key at the community level, as is working with provincial and federal partners to ensure that responses to social emergencies in our affiliated communities are timely and community led.

SEM developed and delivered the Emergency Capacity Building Education Program across our communities this year. The content focused on giving First Nation community staff practical emergency management knowledge they can use during an emergency.

SEM also worked directly with affiliated communities on emergency preparedness, including emergency and evacuation plans, response roles, communications, exercises, and gap identification before an emergency.

The Social Emergency Manager continued relationship building with First Nations, partner organizations, police services, provincial and federal partners, and other emergency response entities to ensure people and resources are available to call on when our communities need intensive support.

A major focus during these interactions is making sure Elders, ceremony, sacred fires, family needs, and community protocols are part of the response when appropriate.

Another initiative this past year involved working on building KCA's own emergency response capacity, including planning communications and identifying equipment and mobile response needs so we can get into communities quicker and be better prepared to support them.

Strengthening our internal emergency response capacity has increased our ability to coordinate the behind-the-scenes pieces that come with emergencies, including hotels, transportation, meals, staffing, equipment, supplies, communications, safety planning, and cost tracking for reimbursement.

CRISIS SERVICES

Increasing capacity in our affiliated communities continued to be a major focus for Crisis Services this past fiscal year. The team supported community crisis teams and mental wellness workers during 44 community crises and provided five workshops as professional development opportunities for community-based staff.

The Crisis Services team also focused on professional development by attending Critical Incident Group Debriefing, Wise Practices for Life Promotion, Trauma and Grief, and Brief Supportive Counselling.

Key Highlights

Provided 7-days-a-week, daytime service including on-call coverage during holidays such as Christmas and New Year's break.

The team responded to crises in Northwest Angle #37, Onigaming, Migisi Sahgaigan, Wunnumin Lake, and North Caribou Lake First Nations.

Coordinates annual support during freeze and breakup of the ice to the community of NWA#33 - Angle Inlet. This part of the community is only accessible by water, and it is the most remote of the First Nations served by KCA. 46 Angle Inlet families received delivery of food and medical supplies by helicopter during these critical periods.

Crisis Services provided care and support during 29 passings this year across affiliated communities. We'd like to acknowledge that this is no way reflects the scale of loss across Treaty #3 communities. Where community leadership and families reach out to activate our supports, our team will attend and provide care to families during wake and funeral rites, and in the days and weeks following as loved ones process their experiences.



CRISIS SERVICES









KENORA MAKWA PATROL

Kenora Makwa Patrol (KMP) is a 24/7 community safety and wellbeing initiative within the City of Kenora. KMP carries out community patrols using a dedicated van, as well as foot patrols, safe rides, and wellbeing checks for the most vulnerable and unhoused community.

KMP also works with community partners to provide food and water, administer naloxone and overdose intervention, perform safe needle pickup and area checks, offer referrals, and deliver life-preserving measures for people who are unhoused during extreme weather conditions.

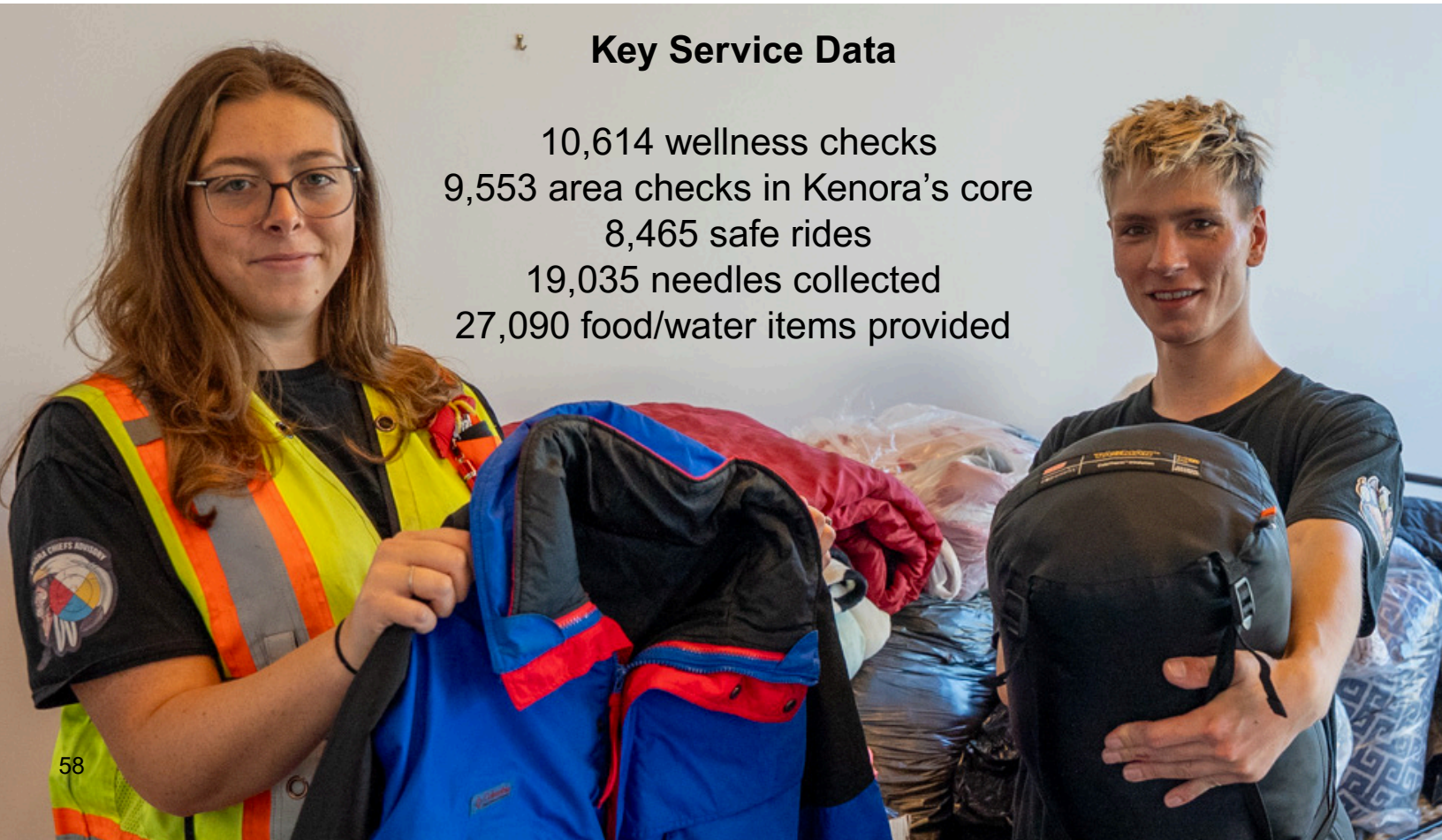
KMP provides focused care to prevent loss of life due to extreme weather.

Patrollers typically receive calls from the general public, police service partners, Lake of the Woods District Hospital, and the Morningstar Detox Centre. KMP operates a mix of vehicle and foot patrols.

KMP runs the Winter Warmth Drive in partnership with the City of Kenora, requesting new or gently used winter jackets and other cold weather clothing and blankets.

Kenora Makwa Patrol would not be effective without strong partnerships with the City of Kenora, LWDH, and other organizational partners.

Thank you to the community of Kenora for all your kind support in donating basic-needs items throughout the year, which all go toward direct support for patrons.



KENORA MAKWA PATROL









INDIGENOUS HEALING AND WELLNESS STRATEGY (IHWS)

Program support is provided to five affiliated First Nation communities for their Indigenous Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Programs, Community Wellness Worker Programs and the IHWS - Mental Health Program.

This year, frontline staff participated in two workshops/training/program resource sessions and 13 one-on-one administrative support sessions.

Key Highlights

Kenora Chiefs Advisory provides support, information sharing and networking opportunities to our community Health Directors through our Health Network, with 5 meetings being held this year

HBHC workers attended the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Conference in Niagara Falls in April 2025

FAMILY WELL-BEING (FWB)

Program support is provided to six FWB frontline staff from participating affiliated communities.

KCA assists with reports, orientation, training and network supporting the goal of the community-based FWB programs in reducing violence in families and interrupting the cycle of violence; reducing the need to bring Indigenous children and youth into the child welfare and youth justice systems; and making progress to the overall health and well-being of communities.

Key Highlights

Participation in MCCSS Community of Practice meetings that supports learning from other First Nation FWB programs

Professional development opportunities supported community FWB staff with effective program planning, budgeting and education on relevant program topics.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

CSS supports Community Coordinators with their Home Support and Homemaker Programs, ensuring members remain safely and independently at home while strengthening local capacity and community-based service delivery. This includes supports for Elders, persons with disabilities, and community members who require prenatal, postnatal, post-surgical, or other in-home assistance

Strengthening relationships through community engagement, building staff capacity, and supporting consistent service delivery and networking opportunities:

81 in person community visits
27 client assessments
16 staff training/mentoring/support activities

“Patrick Mazzuca, Community Support Services Coordinator, provides excellent administrative support and enhanced services to the Home Support and Homemakers Program. His willingness to assist communities beyond scheduled visits, whenever needed, demonstrates his commitment to supporting staff, Elders, and community members by answering questions and providing assistance wherever possible. Most importantly, Patrick ensures that services remain community-based, with site visits planned well in advance to allow for effective coordination, preparation, and appropriate notice to community members.”

- Ontario Works, Washagamis Bay



ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

Our goal is to prevent illness, promote health, and prolong life at a community level.

Environmental Health Officers identify hazards, discuss concerns with community leaders, educate the public, and respond to environmental health complaints in order to build community capacity. We want to give people the knowledge and support needed to control their own health outcomes.

One of the biggest successes has been seeing some communities begin utilizing our septic permitting process where permits had not been applied for over the past five years. Ensuring these systems are properly designed and installed is very important to protecting the land and water within our communities.

Conducted 114 septic inspections and processed 12 new septic applications.

7 food safety certification courses were held, with a 94.5% pass rate.

Performed 15 housing inspections, 5 food facility inspections, 5 community care inspections and over 26 rabies investigations.

Analyzed 1,501 water samples.





Annual Traditional Powwow
Washagamis Bay First Nation

CULTURAL TEAM

Fostering Mino-Bimaadiziwin at KCA means connecting people to culture, tradition, identity, and belonging, and centering this at the heart of health and wellbeing. We must acknowledge and appreciate KCA's Anishinaabe staff, not only our dedicated Cultural Team, but Anishinaabe staff across the organization who embody their knowledge and gifts through their work every day.

We are blessed to work with Cultural Advisors, Coordinators, Skaabes, all of whom work alongside our Elders Council and weave throughout the organization supporting everything from our seasonal ceremonies and feasting protocols to caring for Kohkom Drum and our Lodges, walking with KCA staff as part of onboarding, and encouraging personal and professional growth.

No matter what background our staff are from, we recognize one another as human beings, in mutual respect, and all staff have opportunities to learn from Anishinaabe in KCA and the generosity of Knowledge Carriers who work with us also.

Direct supports by our Cultural Team for 540 individuals, family members of all ages.

Once more, we take a moment to recognize our Lodges, helping Spirits, Lodge Keepers, Conductors, Skaabes and Cultural Coordinators for their commitment to participants' healing and wellbeing. Over the year, the team supported, conducted and/or hosted over 80 Purification Lodges.

Lodges were held for Kenora Chiefs Advisory staff, acknowledging the healing and therapeutic work and intensity carried by any staff. Lodges were held to support Officers of our police services.

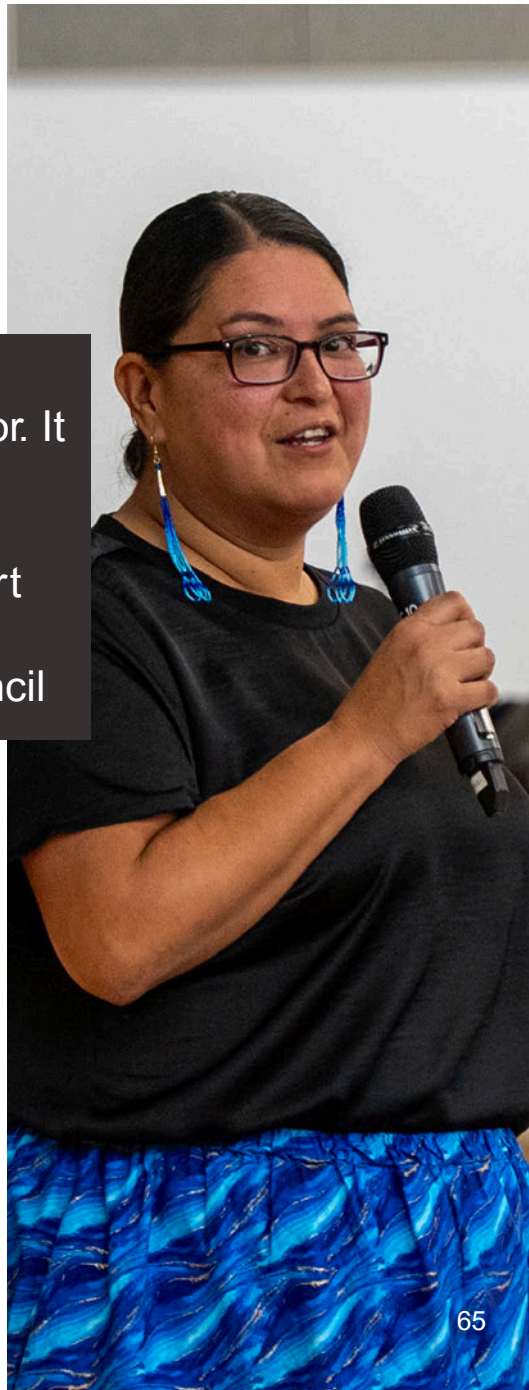
Approximately half of all Lodges held were from tobacco passed by clients served across the organization. These lodges may have been conducted to support an individual, family or group healing as needs presented themselves.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the collaboration in ceremony supporting partner organizations including Grand Council Treaty #3, Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig's Healing Lodge, Migizi Treatment Centre, Municipal Leadership, Kenora Justice Centre, Kenora District Jail, and representatives from the Ministry of Attorney General, and Office of the Solicitor General.

CULTURAL TEAM







"Mino-Bimaadiziwin represents living in balance and harmony — with oneself, others, the land, and the Creator. It is about walking in a good way, guided by love, respect, honesty, courage, wisdom, humility, and truth. Through these teachings, we strive to live the good life and support one another in our collective wellness journey."

– Elders Council














OGIMAAWABIITONG
KENORA CHIEFS ADVISORY














Myrtle Beach



Annual Traditional Powwow
Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation

OUR STRENGTHS ARE OUR PEOPLE



www.kenorachiefs.org

