



UNION
OF NOVA
SCOTIA
MI'KMAQ

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Douglas Brown
Executive Director
Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq
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It's been quite a while since we all met and I'd like to finally welcome us all back to a post-covid frame of reference – meaning that we go forward from here having learned many lessons through the lens of travel and meeting restrictions, supply chain and employee shortages and many other employment and life annoyances.

We, at the UNSM, are very lucky to have come out of the other side of the pandemic while still in a state of steady growth and achievement. This might not have been possible if we had not first secured the financial stability of the UNSM prior to the crisis. For that, I think we owe thanks to the efforts of Mike Dwyer and his fostering of great relations with our funders. Mike was also instrumental in constructing workable covid schedules to safeguard workspace and common areas in our new offices at Membertou Place.

There are others to whom we owe gratitude for stepping “above and beyond” their formal employment descriptions and functions when times were especially tough in 2020. These include Kelly Holley, who volunteered to step up to lead an emergency measures UNSM team; Jennifer Jesty, who was immediately tasked to take over that team in the midst of covid chaos; Mindy Denny, who effectively lobbied for covid funding and resources; Richard (Buddy) Young and Todd Vasallo, who both continued to deliver wellness services to the Indian Day School claimants; and Bev Madill who unflinchingly stepped into a needed leadership role after the unfortunate passing of our very missed Sally Johnson.

Despite the covid climate of the past few years, the UNSM has grown and

matured as an organization. Our overall budget has increased over 400 percent. We now employ well over 50 persons – all of whom now benefit from a newly established medical, dental and pension program at the UNSM. Furthermore, our staff are guided by an evolving staff policy that strives to reflect Mi'kmaq values.

To meet the needs of an organization in growth, the UNSM has restructured some of its elements and added two new departments to our administrative arm. Our new Human Resources department is directed by Rachel Paul-Coles and our growing Communications branch is led by Jessica Christmas. We are restructuring our Information Governance program under the overall direction of Joan Stevens and direct management of Robin Thompson, both of whom graciously accepted the challenge. And finally, Kara Paul, who is the new UNSM Health Director. All our departments have benefitted from updated software programs (*Quickbooks; Plooto; Slack; Bamboo; Mosyle; Microsoft Office*) which assist greatly with organizing tasks, information and UNSM records.

As for me, I remain very proud and honored to serve our five member communities of Unama'ki with such a fine cadre of professional and technical expertise.

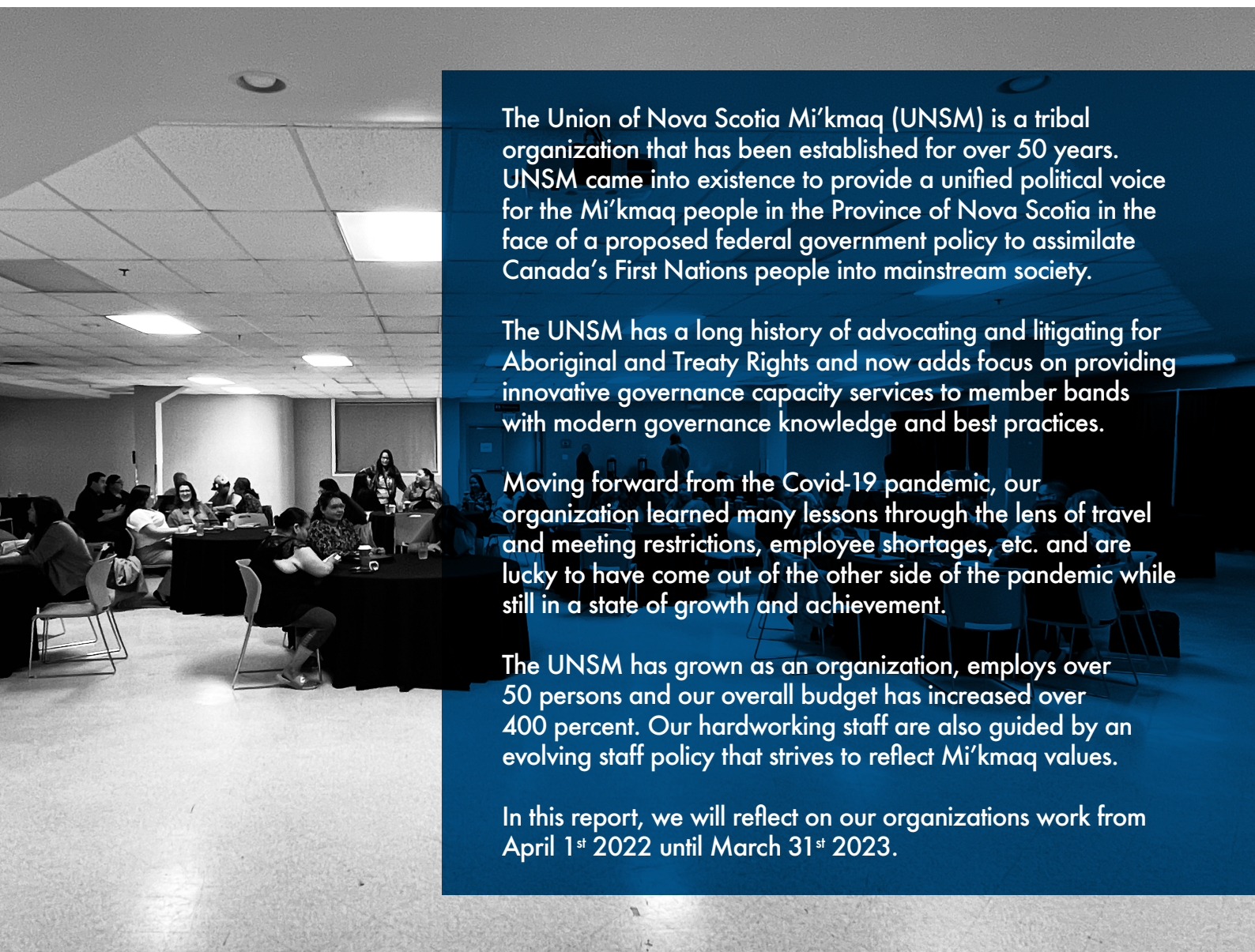
Wela'lin,

Douglas Brown
Executive Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

02.	EXECUTIVE MESSAGE
03.	TABLE OF CONTENTS
04.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
05.	MISSION STATEMENT & OBJECTIVES
06.	UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ: A HISTORY
07.	MEMBER BANDS
08.	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
9-11.	UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ: ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS
12-13.	TRIPARTITE FORUM
14-16.	HEALTH BRANCH
17-18.	ABORIGINAL DIABETES INITIATIVE
19-22.	MENTAL WELLNESS TEAM
23-26.	JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE UNAMA'KI
27-31.	CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
33-42.	INFORMATION GOVERNANCE & DATA PROJECTS
43-50.	FINANCIALS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) is a tribal organization that has been established for over 50 years. UNSM came into existence to provide a unified political voice for the Mi'kmaq people in the Province of Nova Scotia in the face of a proposed federal government policy to assimilate Canada's First Nations people into mainstream society.

The UNSM has a long history of advocating and litigating for Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and now adds focus on providing innovative governance capacity services to member bands with modern governance knowledge and best practices.

Moving forward from the Covid-19 pandemic, our organization learned many lessons through the lens of travel and meeting restrictions, employee shortages, etc. and are lucky to have come out of the other side of the pandemic while still in a state of growth and achievement.

The UNSM has grown as an organization, employs over 50 persons and our overall budget has increased over 400 percent. Our hardworking staff are also guided by an evolving staff policy that strives to reflect Mi'kmaq values.

In this report, we will reflect on our organizations work from April 1st 2022 until March 31st 2023.

MISSION STATEMENT

- To protect and maintain Mi'kmaq rights and entitlement.
- To preserve an enhanced way of life for the Mi'kmaq that is assured by our ancestry and guaranteed by our Mi'kmaq Treaty Rights.
- To guarantee liberty, freedoms and restoring title.
- To fulfill the goals and objectives of the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq as stated in the Constitution.
- To promote the education of the bands in matters affecting the Mi'kmaq.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote the welfare and well-being of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.
- To improve the economic and social conditions of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.
- To promote the rights of Mi'kmaq people, to inform Mi'kmaq of their rights and to assist Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia in their enforcement of their rights.
- To promote discussion of Mi'kmaq problems.
- To seek to promote a better understanding between Mi'kmaq and other people.
- To initiate and carry out programs for the advancement of Mi'kmaq people.
- To cooperate with governmental and private agencies for the promoting of the interests of Mi'kmaq people.
- To do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objectives.



UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ: A HISTORY

1969

In response to the Federal Government's White Paper Policy, the Union of Nova Scotia Indian's was formed by 12 First Nation's communities in Nova Scotia and founding President, Noel Doucette of Potlotek.

UNSI held its first meeting on July 11th and ratified its constitution on September 13th, 1969, during its first annual general assembly.

1970

UNSI was formally incorporated under the Nova Scotia Societies' Act on July 3rd, 1970.

1986

The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq was formed, leaving the UNSI to serve the five First Nation communities in Unama'ki.

1988

The Union of Nova Scotia Indian's became a Tribal Council – a grouping of First Nations who joined together to provide services to member First Nations.

1992

The UNSI's present by-law was adopted in July 1992.

1997

The by-law was later amended during its 28th annual assembly held in We'koqma'q in July 1997.

1999

"The Marshall Decision" On September 17, 1999, the Supreme Court of Canada issued a historical decision, *R. v. Marshall*, in which affirmed the right of Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and parts of Quebec, to fish commercial to attain a "moderate livelihood." The decision was based on the Treaties of 1760-61.

2004- 2005

"Duty to Consult" The Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) handed down three (3) landmark decisions that found the Crown (both provincial and federal) has a duty to consult with Aboriginal peoples regarding decisions, or taking actions, that might adversely affect their established or potential Aboriginal rights and Treaty rights (*Haida*, 2004; *Taku*, 2004; *Mikisew Cree*, 2005.) In response, the governments of Nova Scotia, Canada and the Mi'kmaq agreed to follow a Consultation Terms of Reference that lays out a process for Crown consultation with the Mi'kmaq.

2019

Union of Nova Scotia Indians was renamed to Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) in 2019.

2020- 2023

Due to the State of Emergency of the Covid-19 pandemic, many organizations and employees encountered work-related challenges but worked remotely from the safety of their homes.

The Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq secured office space in September 2021 at Membertou Place. This is the first for the organization to have many of its departments within the same building.

Moving forward from the Covid-19 pandemic, the UNSM has grown as an organization, employs over 50 persons and our overall budget has increased over 400 percent.

MEMBER BANDS

UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ



MEMBERTOU FIRST NATION

47 AUTWEN MAS'L AWTI
MEMBERTOU NS, B1S 2P5
PHONE: 902-564-6466
FAX: 902-539-6649

CHIEF TERRANCE J. PAUL
CRAIG CHRISTMAS
DEAN CHRISTMAS
GAIL CHRISTMAS
STORM SACK
LEE GOULD
JOHANNA LAPORTE
DAVID MARSHALL
GRAHAM MARSHALL
PAUL MACDONALD
ALLISTER (BUSTER) MATTHEWS
ANTHONY (IKE) PAUL
LAWRENCE PAUL

ESKASONI FIRST NATION

63 MINI MALL DRIVE
ESKASONI NS, B1W 1A6
PHONE: 902-379-2800
FAX: 902-379-2172

CHIEF LEROY DENNY
SOPHIA BASQUE
BERTRAM BERNARD
BLAIR BERNARD
DUMA BERNARD
LEON DENNY
ELDON GOULD
PIERRE GOULD
DERECK JOHNSON
THOMAS JOHNSON JR.
STARR PAUL
CHRIS STEVENS
JOHN F. TONEY

POTLOTEK FIRST NATION

12004 HIGHWAY 4
BOX 538
RR 1 ST. PETER'S NS
B0E 3B0
PHONE: 902-535-3317
FAX: 902-535-3004

CHIEF WILBERT MARSHALL
TYRONE BERNARD SR.
MARY SUSAN LAFFORD
MARY LEE JOHNSON
AARON MARSHALL
JUNIOR JOHNSON
JONATHAN MARSHALL
ISAIAH BERNARD
JOCELYN MARSHALL

WE'KOQMA'Q FIRST NATION

PO BOX 149
WHYCOCOMAGH NS, B03 3M0
PHONE: 902-756-239
FAX: 902-756-2393

CHIEF ANNIE BERNARD-DAISLEY
STUART BASQUE
JASON BERNARD
JOHN L. BERNARD
WALLACE BERNARD
JOHN W. CREMO
PETER J. GOOGOO
STEVE GOOGOO
STEWART PETERS
BRANDON POULETTE

WAGMATCOOK FIRST NATION

PO BOX 30001
WAGMATCOOK NS, B0E 2N0
PHONE: 902-295-2598
FAX: 902-295-3398

CHIEF NORMAN BERNARD
KIMBERLY DENNY
CORNELIA PECK
JAMES PECK
LESTER PECK
JASON PIERRO
PETER PIERRO





BOARD OF DIRECTORS



CHIEF LEROY DENNY
ESKASONI



CHIEF TERRANCE J. PAUL
MEMBERTOU



CHIEF WILBERT MARSHALL
POTLOTEK



CHIEF NORMAN BERNARD
WAGMATCOOK



**CHIEF ANNIE
DAISLEY-BERNARD**
WE'IKOQMA'Q



STARR PAUL
ESKASONI - COUNCILLOR



JOHN FRANK TONEY
ESKASONI - COUNCILLOR



**UNAMA'KI DISTRICT CHIEF
ALEX CHRISTMAS**



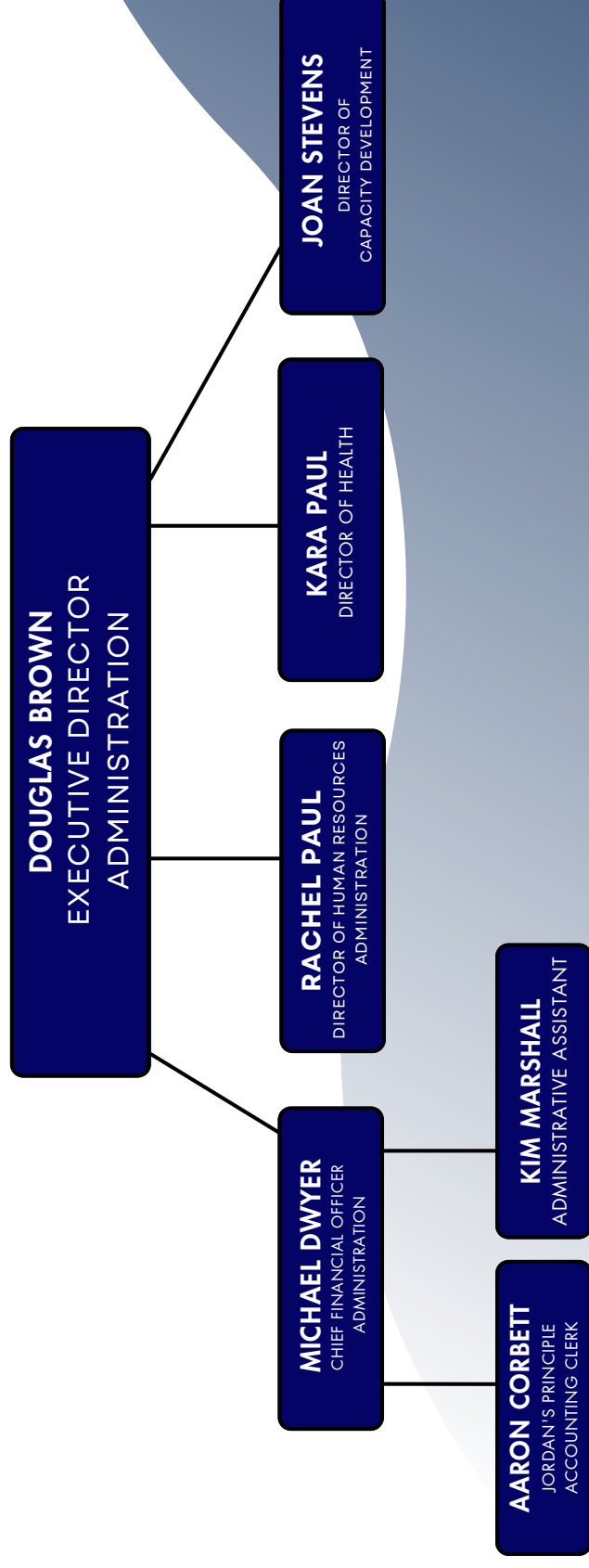
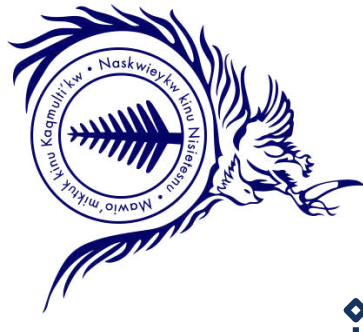
**KJI SAQAMAQ
NORMAN SYLLIBOY**
MI'KMAQ GRAND COUNCIL



KJI KEPTIN ANTLE DENNY
MI'KMAQ GRAND COUNCIL

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

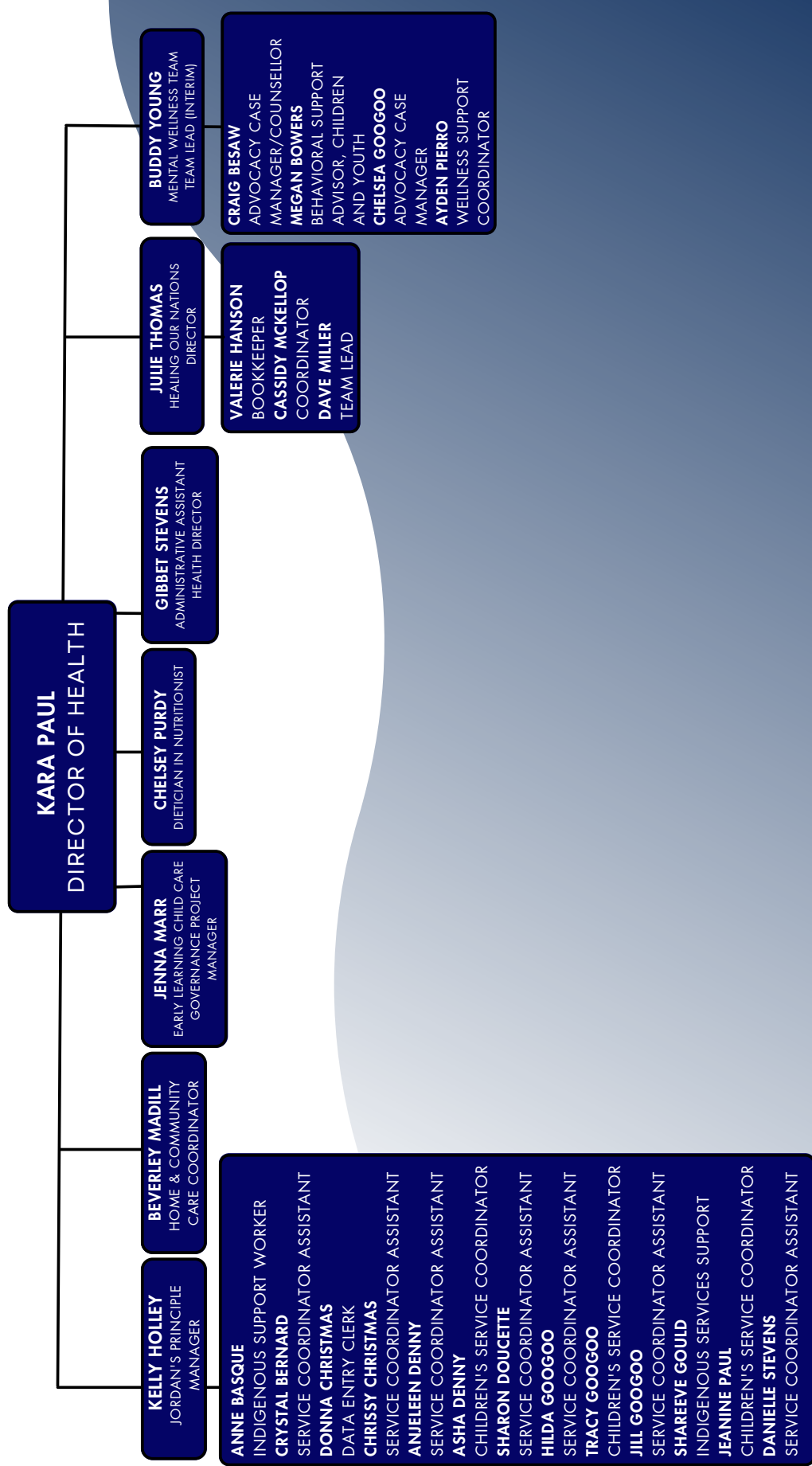
ADMINISTRATION





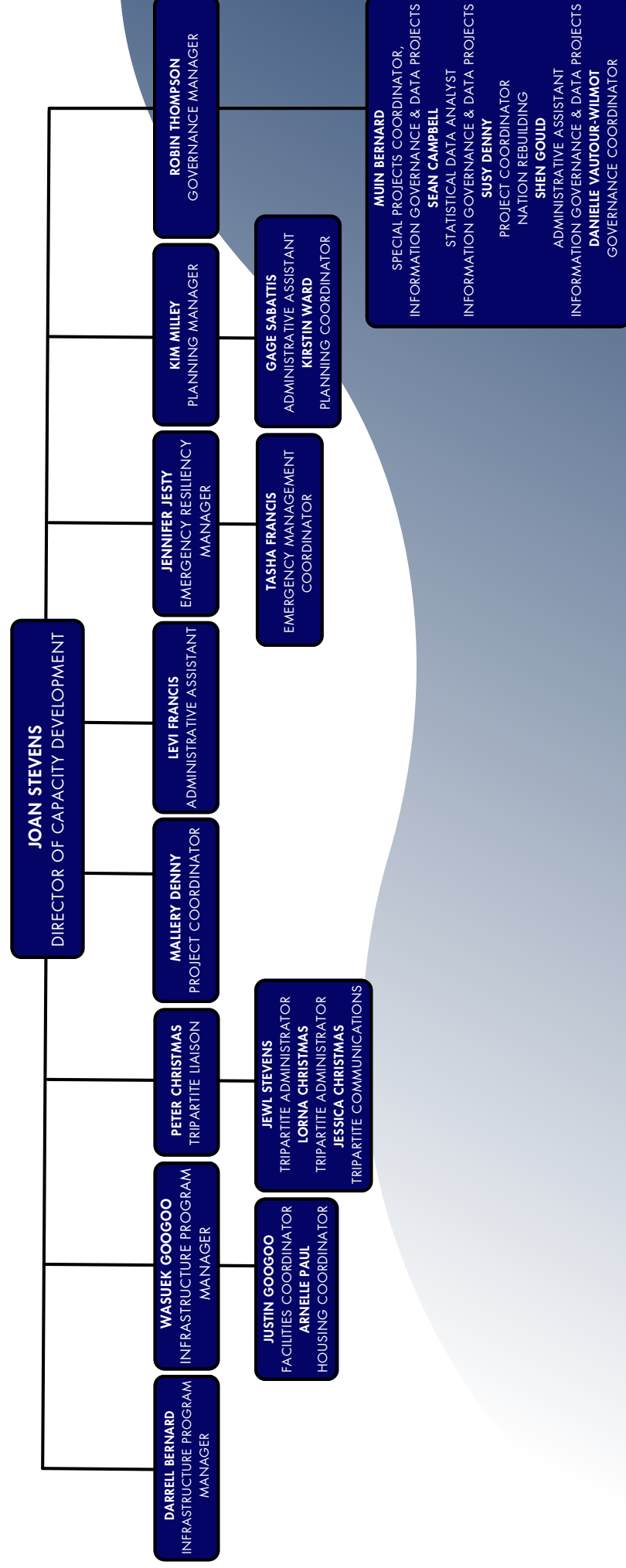
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

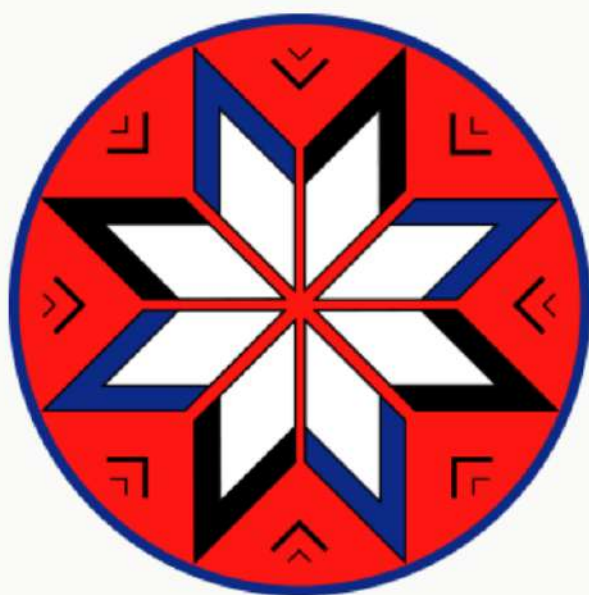


ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ



Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada
TRIPARTITE FORUM

**A N N U A L
R E P O R T**

2022-2023

TRIPARTITE FORUM



The Tripartite Forum is administered by The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq and the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association. It serves as a vehicle for change within the 13 Mi'kmaq communities in the province of Nova Scotia.



All three (3) organizations met with the Provincial and Federal counterparts to restructure and create a co-operative and equal structure that aligns with the Forum's work priorities, while enhancing the quality of operational outcomes and increasing participation and communication between all parties.

The COVID-19 pandemic slowed the momentum of the restructuring, but it was completed in March 2021.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee is the highest level in the decision-making process in the Tripartite Forum. Final decisions are made at this level with consensus from all members. Decisions can overrule present policy, change future policy, initiate and provide input to legislative change if necessary. All Tripartite committees require approval from the Executive Committee in their formation, mandate and workplans.

Composition:

Voting members:

13 Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs

Regional Director General – Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

Chief Executive Officer – Nova Scotia Office of L'nu Affairs (NSOLA)

'Ex Officio' Members:

Executive Directors of CMM, UNSM, NSNWA

President of NSNWA

K'ji-Saqmaw of the Mi'kmaq Grand Council

District Chiefs (CMM and UNSM)

OFFICIALS COMMITTEE

The Officials Committee receives options and recommendations from the Working Committees and offers decisions within its authority and policy. The Officials Committee

approves the Working Committee's mandates and provides direction as stated by the Executive Committee.

Composition:

Voting Members:

Two Chiefs

(Selected at each Tribal Council's Boards)

Representatives of CMM, UNSM, NSNWA

Senior Official – ISC

Senior Official – NSOLA

Working Committees: *Justice, Health, Social, Economic Development, Culture and Heritage, Education and Sports and Recreation.* The Tripartite Forum has decided to disband the Steering Committee.

Throughout the last year, the Working Committees met virtually then eventually, moved to in-person, due to the pandemic. This slowed down the committee's ability to accomplish its priorities, affecting some work taking place at the time. With gradual lifting of restrictions in the province, some committees met in person. The Tripartite Secretariat consists of three Liaisons, two Communications Officers, two Administrators, and one Project Fund Coordinator.

Although this restructure was recent, staff are working hard to get the New Tripartite Forum back to the momentum it once had.

Peter Christmas

Tripartite Forum Liaison

Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq

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HEALTH BRANCH

Community wellness is our upmost priority, guiding the work of the UNSM Health Branch.

As we move into this fiscal year, COVID-19 continues to impact how we deliver programs in communities. As federal and provincial covid protocol become less restrictive, enabling UNSM Health to return to in-community program delivery and service, however, we continue to be cautious.

UNSM Health concluded its first five-year flex agreement 2017-2023 with Indigenous Services Canada on March 31st, 2023. In preparation for our second agreement, the health branch developed five-year workplan for our second five-year flex agreement 2023-2028. I am pleased to report our flex agreement submission was approved and commenced April 1st, 2023.

In response to growing community needs, we expanded our programing and increased staff compliment. I expect this to continue into the next fiscal year, as community population grow. There are two new portfolios added to UNSM Branch, Healing Our Nations, and Indigenous Early Learning & Child Care.

Indigenous Early Learning & Child Care Governance (IELCC) strategic development is in collaboration with Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq communities, the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, and Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey. Our IELCC Governance manager, Jenna Marr of Sipekne'katik is focused on developing working relationships with daycares, headstarts, and Early Childhood programs of Mi'kmaq communities of Nova Scotia, other IELCC technicians in the Atlantic, provincial/federal governments, the IELCC Secretariat, Nova Scotia Community College, Tajikeimik, Ta'n Etli-tpi'tmk, METS, and Atlantic Policy Congress. The manager works closely with her counterpart at Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq and the Nova Scotia L'nu Early Learning and Child Care Governance Advisory Committee with representatives from health, education, and social. The manager sits at Maw-Meltamk L'nui - Kina'masit Advisory (Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey Advisory Committee), Regional IELCC Subcommittee Meeting of the Atlantic Health Partnership, and the NSCC L'nu Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee.

Healing Our Nations (HON) has long been affiliated with UNSM Health and is now an UNSM health department. Under the umbrella of UNSM Health, Healing Our Nations will continue "teach, educate and support our people in the prevention of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis" in the Atlantic Region. HON's move to UNSM was approved by the Board in December 2022 and became official April 1st, 2023. HON will be included in UNSM Health reports going forward.

Welcome to our new **UNSM Dietitian**, Chelsey Purdy (*pictured below*) of Acadia First Nation. Chelsey started her tenure February 2023, close to fiscal end. In that short time, Chelsey collaborated with Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey offering workshops on Food Sovereignty for post-secondary Mi'kmaq students. Students learned about treaty rights, prepare/shared a meal, and tanned fish skins. Chelsey hopes to translate this activity into school classrooms. Chelsey has also been working on finishing her thesis, which is a collaboration with Healing Our Nations and uses arts-based methods to explore past, present, and future access to food for Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS in Mi'kma'ki. Right now, the focus is to build relationships with the 13 Mi'kmaq communities and organizations, aiming to learn about food related work already happening, and connecting with various leaders working in food. This will be a focus for the next year. Chelsey hopes to focus her position on food from a governance perspective, concentrating on decolonizing food and empowering communities with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions about how they access, control, and eat food.



HEALTH BRANCH

After 17 years at UNSM, Angela MacDonald accepted a teaching position at St. Xavier Francis University. Thank you for your service to the Mi'kmaw communities of Nova Scotia.

Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative focus on maintaining contact and support with diabetes health center staff, delivering community-based diabetes self-management journeys, school diabetes education/walking challenge along with the development of diabetes social media postings for community members, Diabetes Café virtual education and support program for those living with Type 2 Diabetes. Communities were offered education session on a variety of diabetes topics with 2 new programs developed for heart month on "heart health & diabetes" and another on "physical activity & diabetes." Communities received an updated list of Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI) programs & services that they can choose from for community sessions. We continued to offer our community-based diabetes self-management journeys. Before COVID, we use to have one Unama'ki gathering, however, the individual community gathering proved to be more effective and well received in communities. New this year was the development of a heart health educational session/program. This program focused on three main activities: a general heart health activity and a second activity focusing on diabetes & heart health. These sessions were followed by either diabetes bingo or a heart healthy cooking class by the community dietitian.

The Heart Smart Kids (HSK) Program was delivered to the schools with focus on grades K to grade 6. Heart Smart Kids (HSK) workbooks are a resource for educators, students and families help develop a better understanding and awareness of overall heart and brain health through promotion of healthy lifestyles. The resources include Indigenous health perspectives and promotes behaviors that contribute to a holistic approach to health along with healthy promoting recipes for students and families.

Home and Community Care Program (HCCP) was the contract holder for Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) funding to host the Atlantic Wholistic Continuum of Care Knowledge Exchange to support Aging in Place, which was held in Moncton, NB in June 2022. Over 90 participants from across the Atlantic region attended to connect and exchange ideas to promote aging in place and/or residential services for individuals in community requiring long term and continuing care. The Wholistic Continuum of Care and Long-Term Engagement process was to identify strengths and supports needed to improve home-based and facility-based care that include respite care, transitional care, permanent care (long term care), hospice and palliative care and other care needs as identified by communities, also hosted ISC Professional Development funding to provide two Home and Community Care Skills Boot Camp refreshers in partnership with Dalhousie University Interprofessional Learning Faculty. This provided both the nurses and continuing care assistants/personal care workers from across the Atlantic region professional development skills to enhance their client care in their community home care programs.

Our **Mental Wellness Team** continues to offer programming and services to the five Unama'ki communities and Paqtnekek. Services that were offered included individual and family counselling, behavioral support for children and youth, advocacy case management, Indian Day School settlement support, traditional healing and programing workshops. Workshops and programs delivered include Options to Anger, New Paths, Virtual Youth Wellness, the Youth Physical Wellness Project and the Community Crisis Comfort Centres. We have reached approximately 1,193 clients. The actual number of community members who benefitted from these services is likely far larger, given that many activities and events do not collect participant data such as sweats, sacred fires, etc.

This particular year has been challenging as there have been many community tragedies along with the impacts of Fiona on our people. We continue to collaborate with the Mental Wellness Team at the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq and...

HEALTH BRANCH

...Eskasoni Crisis Team. We made recommendations to Indigenous Service Canada and Tajiikimik for provincial wide crisis coordination support. This was added as the ISC new Management Operation Plan at the Atlantic Health Partnership.

After five years of service, Nadia House (former Mental Wellness Team Lead) has moved to a position with Indigenous Service Canada. Richard (Buddy) Young of Eskasoni is the Interim Mental Wellness Team Lead/Manager. Thank you, Buddy, for stepping up.

Jordan's Principle is a child-first initiative developed to ensure First Nations children receive equitable services in the areas of education, health, social development, and culture. This past fiscal year, we provided funding for 1279 individual services that were delivered to children throughout Unama'ki. Most individual requests were for educational services, followed closely by requests for Allied Health Services (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech Language Services). Indigenous Services Canada is still failing to meet the legal timelines for application adjudication. Families continue to wait for many months before a decision is made on their request. Indigenous Services Canada expects Jordan's Principle cases to double each year for the next five years. In response, UNSM plans to hire additional staff to meet the expanding demand. We hope to place those staff in Potlotek and Wagmatcook and establish branch offices in those two communities. Office space continues to be a challenge and we are currently working with these communities to secure space.

There is funding available for Capital Assets- Under the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT 41), First Nations, First Nations child and family services agencies and First Nations authorized Jordan's Principle service providers can access funding to buy or build capital assets. These assets are to support the delivery of Jordan's Principle services or child and family services to First Nations.

UNSM Health Leadership, in addition to leading the UNSM Health Branch which includes 28 staff (more being added in 2023-2023) the Director of Health is the current Health Tripartite Interim co-chair (Mi'kmaq), a member of the Dalhousie Medicine Indigenous Admissions Committee that offered acceptance to 10 L'nuk which included

members of our Unama'ki communities, a member of the National Consortium on Indigenous Medical Education's Recruitment and Retention working group, IWK Indigenous Advisory Committee, Nova Scotia Health Lung Cancer Screening Steering Committee, Mi'kmaq & Nova Scotia Health Cancer Strategy Committee, Tajiikimik collaborator, Tui'kn Partnership's Client Linkage Registry Committee, and Health Technician to the Unama'ki Chiefs. In this capacity, the majority of role is spent working with the Chiefs at the Atlantic Health Partnership. I represent our communities at the Public Health & Primary Care Committee, Non-Insured Health Benefits Committee, the Health Directors Committee.



In Peace, Friendship and Wleyuti,

Kara Paul
Director of Health
Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq
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UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ



ABORIGINAL DIABETES
INITIATIVE

**A N N U A L
R E P O R T**

2022-2023

ABORIGINAL DIABETES INITIATIVE

During the pandemic, the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI) programming needed to accommodate public health guidelines and the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq policy.

The focus was maintaining contact and supporting diabetes health center staff, delivering community-based diabetes, self-management journeys, school diabetes education/walking challenge along with the development of diabetes social media postings for community members, Diabetes Café virtual education and support programs for those living with Type 2 Diabetes.

Communities were offered education sessions on various diabetes topics with two new programs developed for heart month, with being Heart Health & Diabetes and Physical Activity & Diabetes. Communities received an updated list of Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI) programs & services to choose from during community sessions.

A major activity was the development of a five-year Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI) workplan for the UNSM.

Health Directors were notified about change to delivery of the Diabetes Self-Management Journey. Community visits were held to plan community-based diabetes self-management journeys in each of the five UNSM communities. Agendas were provided for each community, along with their input to upcoming dates, length of journey and topics that would be covered.

An agenda was planned and developed in consultation with health staff and delivered community-based Diabetes Self-Management program to all five UNSM communities. Program packages and foot care bags were assembled and supplies for foot care bags were purchased.

The development of a heart health educational session/program focused on three main activities: A General Heart Health Activity and another activity focusing on diabetes & heart health. These sessions were followed by diabetes bingo or a heart health cooking class by the community dietician.

Heart Smart Kids Program – All school principals and vice principals received copies

of all three (3) Heart Smart Kids Workbooks for Grades: K-1, 2-3, and 4-6, and were reviewed with Principals. These Heart Smart Kids (HSK) workbooks is a resource for educators, students and families created in partnership with Indigenous organizations and communities to help develop a better understanding and awareness of overall heart and brain health through promotion of healthy lifestyles. The resources include Indigenous health perspectives and promotes behaviors that contribute to a holistic approach to health along with healthy promoting recipes for students and families.

Nurses & Dieticians Education Session on Type 1 Diabetes at School – A review of resources for nurses and dietitians was held in late May 2022, at Mawita'mk in Waycobah. All nine participants were from all five UNSM communities. Participants received bags containing information on ADI resources such as a nine-step food care guide and signs of low blood sugar and how to treat it. Newer treatment options for low blood sugar also included in bags. The day consisted of presentations, group work and viewing relevant videos. Feedback from the evaluations were positive.

Healthy Living Program – This program is available to all interested communities. Potlotek hosted an eight-week Healthy Living Program with input from community health staff. The program focused on gradually increasing steps/day, healthy eating according to Canada's Food Guide/lower salt content etc. and healthy living by decreasing stress. A Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire was administered (PARQ) with follow-up, as appropriate.

School Diabetes Prevention Education and Walking Challenge Program – The school education and walking challenge program was delivered differently due to public health guidelines. The school walking challenge packages included pedometers and materials for all schools and classes to participate. Due to the pandemic, students were unable to share pedometers as they have done in the past, so each school picked one participant from each grade from Grades 4-6. The program ran from Nov 2-25, 2022, during National Diabetes Month, with a total of 31 participants.

UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ



MENTAL WELLNESS TEAM

**A N N U A L
R E P O R T**

2022-2023

MENTAL WELLNESS TEAM



SERVICES OFFERED	CLIENTS SERVED
CASE MANAGEMENT	87
COUNSELLING- INDIVIDUALS	49
COUNSELLING- FAMILIES/GROUPS	47
PROGRAMMING- WORKSHOPS	350
PROGRAMMING- MULTI-SESSION	247
BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT- CHILDREN AND YOUTH	35
TRADITIONAL HEALING	387
INDIAN DAY SCHOOL CLAIMS	120
TOTAL	1193

New Interim Team

The Mental Wellness Team was fortunate to have Nadia House as the team lead, but new opportunities came about, and she has moved on into a new position. For the time being, Richard (Buddy) Young is the interim team lead.

New Services: Youth Physical Wellness Project

The Mental Wellness Team reapplied for funding from Sport for Social Development for Indigenous communities and are currently waiting for further updates to move forward. Ayden Pierro, Wellness Support Coordinator, will assist with the delivery of new services directed at enhancing youth physical wellness.

The staff is working with existing physical wellness supports in communities to identify new funding opportunities, support existing sports and recreation activities, and to create partnerships for new opportunities for youth to engage in activities that foster their physical wellness.

Information Sharing/Promotion

The staff continued to manage two (2) Facebook pages: Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Mental Wellness Team and Indian Day School Survivor Settlement to keep the targeted audience up to date with upcoming events and activities. Staff profiling was featured on our social media pages to introduce staff members and services to our online community.

Professional Development and Training

The staff continued to engage in relevant wellness trainings throughout the year. For example, our team attended the Feather Carriers, which is suicide prevention from an Indigenous lens. We also received Naloxone training for overdose prevention. The staff is scheduled for an alcohol syndrome training soon.

Workshop/Program Delivery & Development

Options to Anger: We offered the option of having an in-person and virtual session for the Options to Anger programming. We completed a total of six (6) full programs with a total of 36 hours of programming. Thirty-seven participants received completion certificates.

New Paths: The Family Violence Program is in the final stages of development. We are almost complete with creating a manual. This program will train people so they can deliver it themselves, that way more clients can be reached.

Standalone Programming:

Building Life Skills, Understanding and Empathy (B.L.U.E) Program:

Arrangements were made. However, the program was cancelled at Sydney Academy due to internal damage caused by the winter weather. The team was unable to resume this program due to time constraints and other commitments.

MENTAL WELLNESS TEAM

Gender & Sexuality Awareness Training

Gender & Sexuality Awareness Training was offered in We'koqma'q and Potlotek to community members who were interested in this matter.

Sydney Academy Wellness Fair

The Wellness Team provided onsite support for youth at Sydney Academy as part of a Wellness Day initiative from SchoolsPlus.

Co-Parenting: Two of our team members collaborated to deliver a new Co-Parenting Program at the Jane Paul Centre. This will be delivered throughout the year.

Traditional Healing and Cultural Support

The Wellness Team utilized the Traditional Healers Funding to provide cultural healing services to an estimate of 387 individuals and families this year. The actual number of community members who benefitted from these services is likely far larger, given that many activities and events do not collect participant data such as sweats, sacred fires, etc.

The team supports many cultural activities and ceremonies that help communities as a whole and as individuals.

For more detailed information, please see the NIHB Traditional Healers Fund Annual Report for 2022-2023.

Our Cultural Support Advisor continued to assist individuals and families to connect with Traditional Healers and to provide support and education to many organizations and groups who seek professional development and cultural healing opportunities for their members. This role has evolved into one that is deeply involved in supporting community members and families throughout the grieving process when they experience a loss, as well as helping organizations with cultural humility sessions.

Counselling & NIHB Mental Health Providers

Craig Besaw is the Mental Wellness Team's Advocacy Case Manager & Counsellor, continues to offer counselling via Two-Eyed seeing approach since June 2021. He has engaged with multiple clients referred

through Jordan's Principal, Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia, Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services of NS, Wagmatcook Health Centre, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Wagmatcook Wellness Court, Probation Services, and self-referrals processed by the Wellness Team. The primary work is with youth and children and continues to work with adults and couples as well.

Ongoing support to communities has been provided following deaths and/or critical incidents, which include, but not exclusive to, Potlotek, Membertou and Eskasoni.

Craig has supervised two students, Monica Boyd who was placed in the Waycobah School which was a co-supervision via Dalhousie at the Master of Social Work level; and Leurette Labobe with UNSM Mental Wellness Team, at a Bachelor of Social Work level. Both successfully completed their programs and are actively engaged within our Mi'kmaq communities.

Behavioural Support

Megan Bowers, Behavioural Support Advisor, has been delivering services to our communities and schools. She collaborated with other team members to deliver programming for parents and helped plan and facilitate other workshops delivered by our team.

Indian Day School (IDS) Settlement Supports

Debra Ginnish, Indian Day School Supports Coordinator, continued to support community members seeking assistance, completing, and following up on their claim form and arranging for narratives. Community members continue to require assistance with reconsideration forms when they were assessed at a lower level for which they had originally applied for. Buddy Young, Cultural Support Advisor, also provided much needed language and cultural support throughout the claim form and healing processes.

Requests for both cultural healing and education about intergenerational trauma have increased since the IDS settlement was reached. Community members are seeking support and healing as they go

MENTAL WELLNESS TEAM

through the claims form process and require ongoing support afterwards to cope with the resurfacing of past traumas.

Funding Opportunities/Proposals

The Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Mental Wellness Team submitted proposals that are still in the process of approval. The team also has access to funding from Corrections Nova Scotia and hopes to collaborate with them in providing services, which they are willing to sponsor.



Richard (Buddy) Young
Cultural Support Advisor/Interim Team Lead
Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq
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(Pictured L-R: Megan Bowers, Ayden Pierro, Chelsea Googoo, Craig Besaw & Buddy Young.)

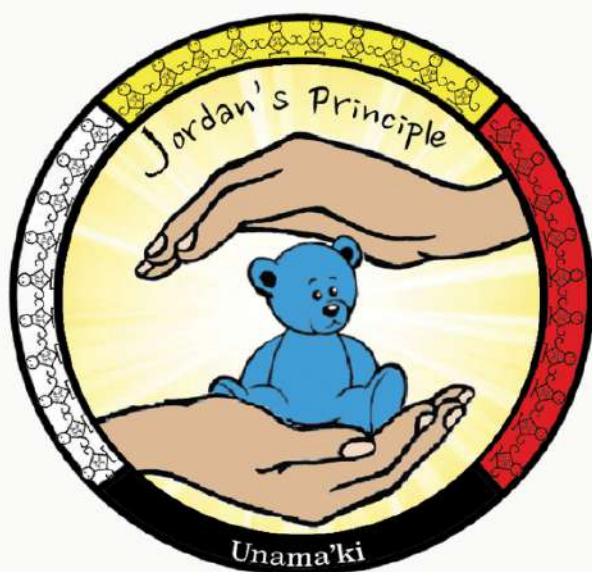


Mental Wellness Team participating in the Pride Walk in We'koqma'q First Nation.



Mental Wellness Team and Capacity Development set up information booths at events.

UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ



JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE UNAMA'KI

**A N N U A L
R E P O R T**

2022-2023

JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE UNAMA'KI

Jordan's Principle is a child-first initiative developed to ensure that First Nations children receive equitable services in the areas of education, health, social development, and culture. It recognizes that First Nations children have been discriminated against, marginalized, and have not had the same opportunities to receive services as other children living in Nova Scotia and follows the principle of substantive equality. Substantive equality seeks to address the inequalities that stem from an individual's particular circumstances, to help put them at the same position and give them the same opportunities as others.

Jordan's Principle has been serving First Nations children living in Unama'ki since 2017. Offices are in Membertou, Eskasoni and We'koqma'q.

SERVICE COORDINATION UPDATES

Service Coordination is the heart of the Jordan's Principle Initiative. If a child has unmet needs in the areas of Health, Education, Social Development and/or Culture, Jordan's Principle may be able to secure funding to meet those needs.

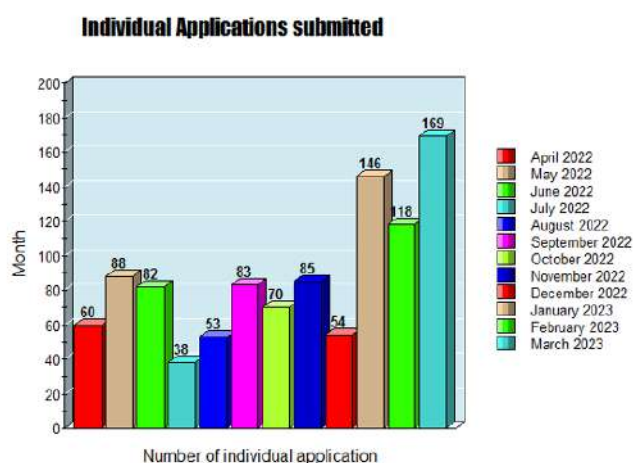
The biggest challenge Jordan's Principle continues to face is the Government's inability to meet the legal timelines for application adjudication. Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) has been ordered to adjudicate applications within 48 hours. However, the Government has failed to adhere to this timeline and families continue to wait for many months before a decision is made.

Back to Basics Approach: Indigenous Services Canada implemented a new approach to their adjudication process. This process is to ensure that ISC is using a non-discriminatory approach that centres on the needs and best interest of the child.

Funding for Capital Assets: Under the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT 41), First Nations, First Nations child and family services agencies and First Nations authorized Jordan's Principle service providers can access funding to buy or build capital assets. These assets are to support the delivery of Jordan's Principle services or child and family services to First Nations.

Individual Requests

Most individual requests were for educational services, followed closely by requests for Allied Health Services (*Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech Language Services.*)



Individual requests for funding have risen sharply in the last quarter (January-March 2023), and Indigenous Services Canada has indicated that they expect Jordan's Principle cases to double each year for the next five years.

In response, the UNSM plans to hire additional staff to meet the expanding demand. We hope to place staff in Potlotek and Wagmatcook and to establish branch offices in those two communities.

JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE UNAMA'KI

GROUP REQUESTS

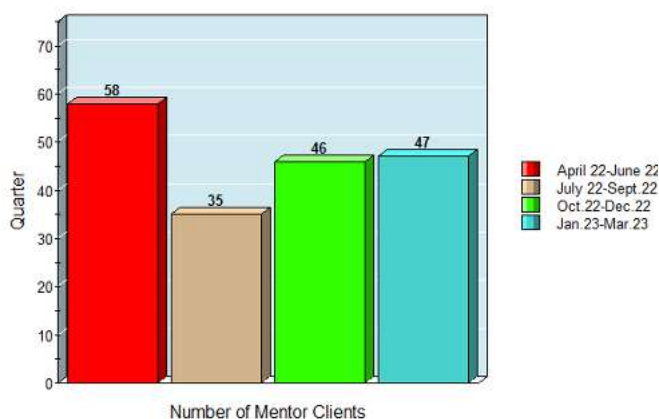
Group applications were submitted to support the following:

- Camp Courage (a camp designed to expose First Nations young women to careers as first responders)
- Audiology Booth for Eskasoni Hearing Clinic
- Family Fun Day - Membertou
- Behavior Interventionist Services for Membertou & Potlotek
- Multiple group applications for services within the two schools including teaching assistants, and bussing services for Wagmatcook/We'koqma'q
- Two (2) Moose Camps
- Multiple educational assessments in We'koqma'q
- Child/Youth Practitioner for Potlotek,
- Developmental Screening Event in Potlotek
- Youth Peer support workers for Eskasoni
- Sensory Room Equipment for School.

CULTURAL SUPPORT UPDATES

Jordan's Principle Cultural Mentoring Program was developed in response to community requests. It will continue to grow and expand to meet the needs of the communities we serve. This year, the focus was on recruiting male mentors. Recruitment events were held in all five Unama'ki First Nation Communities.

Cultural Mentoring



COMMUNITY INITIATIVES/OUTREACH

The Jordan's Principle Team participated in the following outreach activities: Chiefs Health Priorities Working Group, Eskasoni Interagency- regular attendance, Focus Group Discussion- Department of Community Services- Building success for children, youth and families, Wagmatcook Men's Mentoring Recruitment Event, Potlotek Men's Mentoring Recruitment Event, Eskasoni Daycare Graduation, Eskasoni Housing Department - Playground Beautification Project, IRS: Reconciliation Gathering Planning Committee, Moe the Mouse Indigenous Speech/Language Program, Camp OUTside the Lines, MK Mi'kmaq Literacy Specialist Meeting, Membertou Youth Program, Eskasoni Sport and Rec Committee meeting, Wagmatcook & We'koqma'q Trick or Treat Events, Career Day at Cape Breton University.

The team also met with land guardians in Eskasoni, Raising the Villages, Education Board in We'koqma'q, MLSC, Membertou Interagency, L.O.V.E. Program Membertou, Dalbrae Academy, Baddeck Academy, Eskasoni School - Special Education Department, Nova Scotia Early Developmental Intervention Services, Safe and Sound Mobility, Quick Start - Autism Program and met with We'koqma'q Band office regarding the Capital Funding that is currently available.

TRAINING

The Jordan's Principle Team participated and completed training for Gender Identity and Sexuality, Cultural Sensitivity Training, Indigenous Perspectives on Healing from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Public Speaking, Social Media Training (virtual), Provincial Disability Support Program Training, Federal Assisted Living Program Training, Statistics Canada Survey Training, Writer's Workshop (minute taking), Medicine Pouch Training

JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE UNAMA'KI

with Cultural Mentors, Naloxone Refresher Training, Beaded Earring Workshop, Webinar with Learnability – ADHD. The team also received training for new internal data base, Modified Berger information session, Z-Pod (sleep enclosure) information session, NIHB presentation, Facilitation Training and Advanced Excel Training.

PRESENTATIONS

The Jordan's Principle Team participated in multiple presentations at the Assembly of First Nations Continuum of Care Conference, Eskasoni Women's Wellness Event, We'koqma'q Health Centre, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder and Justice Conference and at the Unama'ki College at Cape Breton University.

FUTURE PLANS

Jordan's Principle continues to identify and mitigate individual barriers that prevent families from accessing the services they require, to develop two additional branch offices in Potlotek and Wagmatcook, to ensure children/youth receive quality and culturally appropriate health, social and educational services/supports across all stages and levels of care, to support data collection, analytical activities, and financial processes to better understand and support the needs of children/youth and understand the nature of service gaps, to ensure increased awareness of Jordan's Principle Capital Asset Funding through advertising and attendance at community events and to support the work of the Chiefs in Assembly and the proposed policy options for supporting greater First Nations control over Jordan's Principle as part of the long-term approach to implementing Jordan's Principle.



Kelly Holley
Jordan's Principle Unama'ki Manager
Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq
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(Some of the Jordan's Principle team attending UNSM's staff meeting.)



(Jordan's Principle information? You got it!)

UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ

**A N N U A L
R E P O R T**

2022-2023

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

2022-2023 marked year three of the five-year **Capacity Development** departmental strategic plan. This plan has been instrumental to prioritize the individual and collective needs of our member communities and to provide guidance on how we can address these needs. The five priority areas (governance, planning, infrastructure, emergency management and special projects) are each managed by smaller teams within the department. These teams bring priority areas to life through ongoing engagement with our communities and partners and the day-to-day project management of multiple projects and initiatives.

GOVERNANCE

The **Governance** team, managed by Robin Thompson, assists communities with various governance capacity functions including planning and law making. In 2022, funding for **Governance Coordinators** was secured to address governance capacity priorities including supporting **Strategic Planning** and **Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP)** in Potlotek. The team supports all our member communities with their CCPs in various ways such as mentoring CCP Coordinators, assisting with funding proposals, sharing resources, and CCP coordination and facilitation as requested.

The Governance team also assists communities with developing their own **Matrimonial Real Property (MRP)** laws including legal research, community engagement, and funding proposals. MRP law development continued this year for Potlotek where engagement sessions with Elders and general community members were held to review the draft law. The draft law received Chief and Council support and is now undergoing a legal review. MRP law development for Eskasoni is in its early stages where Chief and Council were provided an orientation.



(Governance team hosting a Matrimonial Real Property engagement session in Potlotek.)

The **L'nu Learning Hub (LLH)** was established to codevelop curriculum with an educational institution in response to stated governance capacity needs of communities. Initially a partnership between the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM), the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), the educational partnership was later changed from NSCC to the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI, Nova Scotia) and the Mi'kmaq Economic Benefits Office (MEBO). Kim Milley was hired as the LLH Project Manager. A logo contest was launched for branding purposes and the successful artwork selected was submitted by Louis Marshall. Curriculum development began in October 2022 and the Project Management course was piloted in March 2023. The pilot included twelve participants between the UNSM and the CMM using a hybrid mode of delivery (in-person and virtual). An upcoming pilot, Strategic Management is scheduled for May 2023 as well as Facilitator Training sessions in April and May 2023.

On behalf of the Grand Council, the UNSM administers the **Nation Rebuilding Project** to examine inherent Mi'kmaq governance for the Nation, starting with Unama'ki. Susy Denny was hired...

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

as the Project Coordinator and the Advisory Committee (including Grand Council members and Executive) guides the work. Facilitated discussions on Mi'kmaw governance between the Grand Council and each Chief and Council took place in March 2023. A larger gathering is planned for April 2023 to include all Chiefs and Councils in Unama'ki, the Advisory Committee, the Regional Chief and other honorary guests. A phase 2 proposal was submitted to continue discussions into other Mi'kmaw districts. Furthermore, research will be conducted in the summer using questions developed by the Advisory Committee.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The **Infrastructure** team is managed by Darrell Bernard and Wasuek Googoo, with coordination support from Arnelle Paul. This team oversees all infrastructure and housing related programs for the UNSM. The **Asset Conditioning Reporting System (ACRS)** recently expanded to the **Extended Asset Conditioning Report (E-ACRS)**, providing even more details about the condition of our assets as part of the transfer of services between ISC and UNSM. This year, inspections were completed for Wagmatcook and We'koqma'q and the list of recommendations were reviewed with the communities.

The team is working on developing an **Asset Management Plan (AMP)** for the communities, which provides a 35-year projection of the cost of re-capitalization and the remaining life of the asset, allowing for better capital planning. The UNSM is also working on developing a **Maintenance Management Plan (MMP)**, a computerized maintenance management system that is intended to schedule and direct work orders based on standard operation procedures. This will ensure regular scheduled maintenance and accountability, prolonging the life of

the assets.

The team assisted communities to identify capital assets which can be easily converted into **transitional housing** units. Funding was secured to develop a housing survey to be used as part of the **housing asset strategy plan**. Specific funding was secured to hire an engineer and a housing inspector to inspect the Wagmatcook church to bring it up to building code standards and provide a list of recommendations for repairs.

The team met with representatives currently rolling out **solid waste management** in their communities or those who are interested in pursuing this initiative. The team established a baseline of where each community is in terms of their progress and/or challenges. The team is looking into ways to secure additional funding for communities in need of support and is researching current solid waste management facilities to determine costs and feasibility of a sorting facility for UNSM member communities.

The team has partnered with Efficiency One (Efficiency Nova Scotia) and is working with the Clean Energy Equity Network (CEEN).

The **Atlantic Indigenous Youth Development Project (AIYDP)** wrapped up this year. Four interns successfully completed the program, and each received a document of learning from NSCC for Community Development and Capacity Building including our own Arnelle Paul, AIYDP (Housing) Coordinator for the UNSM. Congratulations Arnelle!

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



(AIYDP graduates: Chantel Langille, Millbrook and Arnelle Paul, UNSM (Left to Right: Trina Khattar, CMM; Chantel Langille, Millbrook; Arnelle Paul and Joan Stevens, UNSM).

The infrastructure team had also taken on some special projects this year. The Business plan for social enterprise (building supply company) was completed and presented to the Community Administrators and Board of Directors in January 2023. The infrastructure team will start engaging communities to move this forward. Wasuek assisted Wagmatcook to secure funding for trails development and expansion and are currently seeking additional funding. Darrell has been liaising between UNSM and the Province to address the renaming of Kelly's Mountain to Mukla'qati. UNSM also received funding from Canada Summer Jobs again this year, which allowed us to hire a camp coordinator for Camp Outside the Lines and the Governance Cultural Camp (Alick Island), which both took place in August 2022. Craig Besaw of the Mental Wellness Team and Wasuek Googoo of the Infrastructure team planned and co-supervised the coordination of these two camps.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

This was another busy year for the **Emergency Management** team, managed by Jennifer Jesty with coordination support from Tasha Francis.

The **EverBridge Emergency Alert System** continues to be a success where 142 alerts have been sent to date and has helped 48 young people reunite with their families. Just over 4,000 people are now registered for the alert system and policing agencies are now utilizing the system. Due to our participation in the inquiry, the Mass Casualty Commission recommended provincial alert systems be changed. We've received numerous requests to assist other communities set up their own alert systems including Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta.



(Pictured L-R: CBRM Police Chief Robert Walsh, Jennifer Jesty, Chief Terry Paul)

Environmental Scans for all five communities are now completed and delivered. These scans identified problem areas in emergency and disaster preparedness and gave an accurate picture of gaps in several different areas. A consultant was hired to begin work on a comprehensive **All-Hazards Community Plan**. Tasha Francis coordinates this project for the UNSM. **3D Wave Design Flood Modeling** developed a 3D interactive map of each community that will show where communities might flood, or wildfire will spread given certain weather parameters. We also helped the communities prepare for **Hurricane Fiona** and participated in the EMO NS

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

post Fiona conference.

We continue to coordinate training for our communities. Four of our community fire departments were trained to utilize the **Fire Q** (dispatch program) and now all five are in line with all other volunteer Fire Departments within the province. Ten firefighters with the We'koqma'q fire department obtained their Level One Certification. Eighty-five firefighters participated in the **Nova Scotia Power Pole Fire Training for Volunteer Firefighters**, a course designed for firefighters on how to handle a power pole fire and the dangers of high voltage electricity.

Fifty firefighters across our five communities have/will be trained as **Medical First Responders**. Ten people in each of our five communities have/will receive **Level C First Aid** and Automated External Defibrillators (AED) training. Fifteen staff in We'koqma'q received **Incident Command 200** certification, and an **Ice Rescue** training refresher course took place in Wagmatcook. We coordinated an **ATV Rally in Eskasoni** where 175 ATV riders attended and registered with the Eskasoni ATV club.



Jennifer Jesty participated and assisted with Camp Courage Indigenous and spoke to female students about the camp and careers in emergency services.



The Capacity Development Department is led by Joan Stevens, Director of Capacity Development with operational and project support from Kirstin Ward, Operations Coordinator and Mallery Denny, Project Coordinator.

On behalf of our UNSM Capacity Development team, Wela'liek!



Joan Stevens
Director of Capacity Development
Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq
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Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE AND DATA PROJECTS

Annual Report
2022 – 2023



Robin Thompson, **Governance Manager**
Wasuek Googoo, **Project Consultant**
Allystarr Johnson, **Communications & Training Coordinator**
Muin Ji'j Bernard, **Special Projects Coordinator**
Vacant, **Projects Coordinator**
Sean Campbell, **Statistical Data Analyst**
Shenayah Gould, **Administrative Assistant**



Preface

The UNSM Information Governance & Data Projects (IGDP) team co-develops and delivers data-related projects on behalf of First Nations in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland with the support of the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) and other regional bodies across Canada.

Specifically, the IGDP team is responsible for coordinating the First Nations Regional Health Survey (FNRHS or RHS for short), the First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (FNREEES), the First Nations Labour and Employment Development Survey (FNLED), and the new First Nations Regional Social Survey (RSS) activities at the regional level. The team operates under a specific mandate to advance concepts of Mi'kmaq data sovereignty and employ various capacities to execute that mandate.

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the IGDP team is now administered under the Capacity Development department under the direction of Joan Stevens and management of Robin Thompson.

Currently, our team includes a Governance Manager, Communications & Training Coordinator, Special Projects Coordinator, Projects Coordinator (vacant), Statistical Data Analyst, and an Administrative Assistant. As a team, we work to ensure that the principles of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession) are respected and adhered to by those requesting research relationships with Mi'kmaw in Nova Scotia. The team also participates in national and international dialogue to strengthen Indigenous data sovereignty.

The IGDP team relies on input from the Mi'kmaq Research Advisory Committee (MRAC) to inform research and data collection at the regional level. Committee members are practitioners and technicians who represent community interests. These subject matter experts inform research by identifying themes for surveys and providing context to inform decisions on interpretation and report writing.

Mi'kmaq Research Advisory Committee members (FNLED AND RHS)

Chief Andrea Paul, *Pictou Landing First Nation*

Chief Deborah Robinson, *Acadia First Nation*

Councillor Madlene Sark, *Lennox Island First Nation*

Blaire Gould, *Executive Director – Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey*

Darlene Anganis, *Health Director – Membertou First Nation*

Darlene Marshall, *Housing Director – Eskasoni Band Council*

Kara Paul, *Health Director – Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq*

Nina Kent, *Director of Operations – In.Business Program: CBU*

Valerie Bowers, *Executive Director – Mi'kmaq Employment Training Secretariat*

The MRAC met twice during the 2022-2023 fiscal year:

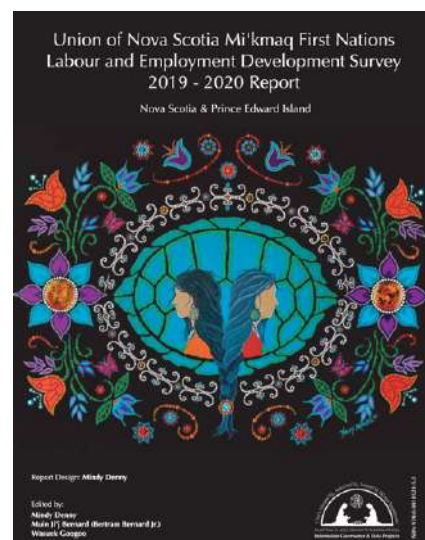
- October 13, 2022
- July 5, 2023

The membership will be evaluated and aligned to reflect the next regional survey, the Regional Social Survey, and the committee will in August or September 2023 to provide associated feedback.

First Nations Labour and Employment Development Survey (FNLED)

The First Nations Labour and Employment Development Survey (FNLED) is a national survey initiative that gathers labour market information about employment, labour, jobs, and skills in First Nations communities. It is one of Canada's only First Nations-governed labour and employment surveys. It collects information about on-reserve and northern First Nations communities based on Western and traditional understandings of employment trends, workplace culture and education. The FNLED interviewed random participants aged 15 – 64 who have been in the workforce or plan to be.

The IGDP team had the opportunity to hosted the FNLED Dissemination Conference on July 6, 2023 in Dartmouth. The conference participants included leadership, practioners, community members, elders, and band administrators. Participants gained valuable information about their community.



Picture: FNLED Conference held in Delta Dartmouth on Thursday, July 6, 2023

Each First Nation community was provided a copy of the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq First Nations Labour and Employment Development Survey 2019 – 2020 report. The FNLED Report highlighted findings of the survey, such as household and personal income levels, information from social assistance, knowledge of traditional culture and foods, employment and unemployment information, and labour skill force information within the Mi'kmaq communities.

We would like to thank our fieldworkers for the FNLED data collection:

The Late Audrey Cremo, *Eskasoni First Nation*, who has been a fieldworker for the IGDP team for many years, Wela'liek.

Ashley Lewis, *Lennox Island First Nation*

Bobbilee Dennis, *Eskasoni First Nation*

Cori Julian, *Eskasoni First Nation*

Frances Googoo, *Wagmatcook First Nation*

Heather Mills, *Pictou Landing First Nation*

Helen Dennis, *Eskasoni First Nation*

Jasmine Collins, *Glooscap First Nation*

Jerry Lee Dennis, *Eskasoni First Nation*

Josh Dennis, *Eskasoni First Nation*

Julie Martin, *Sipekne'katik First Nation*

Keisha Toney, *Annapolis Valley First Nation*

Madonna Prosper, *We'koqma'q First Nation*

Maggie Organ, *Miawpukek First Nation*

Michaela Julian, *Sipenke'katik First Nation*

Misti Myers, *Lennox Island First Nation*

Nilan Marshall, *Eskasoni First Nation*

Reanne Sylliboy, *Millbrook First Nation*

Schurman Peters, *Abegweit First Nation*

Shylo Marshall, *Membertou First Nation*

Tara Mellen, *Potlotek First Nation*

First Nations Regional Health Survey – Phase 4 (RHS)

The Regional Health Survey (RHS) was mandated by the Assembly of First Nations in 1996 due to the lack of reliable information on health and well-being of First Nations, since they are excluded from major national health surveys. It was also mandated to enable First Nations to control their own health information. The pilot RHS was in 1997. The RHS Phase 1, in 2002-2003. The RHS Phase 2, in 2008-2010. The RHS Phase 3, in 2015-2016.

RHS Phase 4 Objectives to:

- Enhance First Nations' capacity and control over research (OCAP);
- Offer scientific and culturally valid information for planning, policy & advocacy at community, regional and national levels;
- Assist First Nations in assessing their communities' progress;
- Support the development of quality plans, such as comprehensive community plans;
- Serve as a model for Community-Based Research; and
- Be a reliable source of information for communities to utilize to respond according to actual needs.

By October 13, 2022, the IGDP team had collected 4 BCRs from participating First Nations. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 Pandemic, slowed this progress. The 4 BCRs collected are from:

- Miawpukek First Nation, NLFD
- We'koqma'q First Nation, NS
- Lennox Island First Nation, PEI
- Abegweit First Nation, PEI

The RHS Phase 4 BCR collection resumed in May of 2023. IGDP team needs to collect BCRs from the remaining 12 communities.

To date, the IGDP team has met with Chiefs & Councils, and collected the following BCRs:

- May 9, 2023 - Wagmatcook First Nation, NS
- June 20, 2023 - Eskasoni First Nation, NS

To fully roll out the RHS Phase 4, the IGPD team needs BCRs from the remaining 9 communities:

- Annapolis Valley First Nation, NS
- Sipekne'katik First Nation, NS
- Paq'tnkek First Nation, NS
- Membertou First Nation, NS
- Millbrook First Nation, NS
- Pictou Landing First Nation, NS
- Potlotek First Nation, NS
- Bear River First Nation, NS
- Acadia First Nation, NS
- Glooscap First Nation, NS

The following highlights the annual activity of RHS Phase 4:



FIRST NATIONS REGIONAL HEALTH SURVEY (RHS) – Annual Activity Summary

RHS 2018-2024				
2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2022*	2022-2023	2023-2024
Preparation & Development Phase	Training & Deployment Preparation Phase	Data Collection & Progress Monitoring Phase	Data Monitoring, Processing and Planning Phase	Dissemination & Evaluation Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts w regional delivery organizations Regional staff hired Project planning Training development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questionnaire development Regional component development FNIGC ethics review, regional ethics Questionnaire translation and programming RFP for additional tablets Communications strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field testing Tablet configuration & server preparation Regional training preparation and delivery <u>September 6th, 2022 data collection starts*</u> Support training as required Progress monitoring Data management (on-going) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going data collection Data management (on-going) <u>January 6th, 2024* data collection ends</u> Data cleaning Return of cleaned data to regions Plan for evaluation, lessons learned RFP for evaluation RFP for authors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report writing Report release (TBD) Additional products Communications strategy Independent evaluation Lessons learned workshop Wrap-up & deliverables

*Delays in data collection start date due to Covid-19 pandemic

First Nations Regional Social Survey (RSS)



The First Nations Regional Social Survey (RSS) is a new survey focusing on the well-being of children and families living on reserve and is being carried out by the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) in collaboration with Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq. By gathering First Nations driven data on social and economic indicators, the RSS hopes to better understand the socioeconomic context and experiences of First Nations children and families.

The information collected from the RSS will help our communities, organizations, and all levels of government develop and support programs and policies aiming to improve the well-being of Mi'kmaq families living on reserve. The RSS is a survey by First Nations people for First Nations people.

The RSS represents a continuation of previous work done by FNIGC and UNSM. Building from the foundational work of the First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS), the First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (FNREEES), and the First Nation Labour and Employment Development Survey (FNLED), the RSS will provide quality and credible information on the well-being of children and families on reserve.

Timeline:

First Nations Regional Social Survey (RSS)	
RSS 2021-2026	
Year 1 2021-2022	Preparation & Planning Phase
Year 2 2022-2023	Development, Training & Deployment Preparation Phase
Year 3 2023-2024	Data Collection & Progress Monitoring Phase
Year 4 2024-2025	Data Collection & Monitoring, Processing & Planning Phase
Year 5 2025-2026	Dissemination & Evaluation Phase

On October 13, 2022, the IGDP team met with the Mi'kmaq Research Advisory Committee (MRAC) to introduce and discuss the new Regional Social Survey (RSS). The meeting discussed the new proposed methodology, project deadlines, background, timeline of the project, and examples of potential survey themes. This meeting had a deadline to identify and prioritize themes the Atlantic Region would like to study in their survey. The MRAC ranked the given 19 themes from FNIGC, and the additional themes identified by the MRAC, with 23 themes. Below are the themes rated from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important themes for the new RSS.

Demographics ★5	Mobility ★5
Household/Family Composition ★5	Basic Needs ★5
Family Well-Being ★5	Access to Supports and Services ★5
Community Well-Being ★5	Access to Technology ★5
Education/Early Learning ★5	Economic Well-Being ★5
Childcare ★5	Food and Nutrition ★5
Caregiver Overall Health/Mental Health/Well-Being ★5	Additional Theme: Non-Status On-Reserve ★5
Child/Youth Well-Being ★5	Additional Theme: Status Off-Reserve ★5
Culture/Cultural Continuity/Identity/Spirituality ★5	Additional Theme: Communication ★5
Language Knowledge/Use ★5	Additional Theme: Environmental Issues ★5
Connections with Land/Water/Traditional Territory ★5	
Family History/Intergenerational Experiences ★5	
Housing ★5	

The IGDP attended the RSS Content Development National Gathering on March 21 – 22, 2023. The gathering had attendees develop the research questions, methodology, work plan and timeline set-up, themes, and knowledge exchange. Regional partners are invited to share milestones and activities that need to be done between the gathering (March 2023) and data collection (approx. July 2024).

Milestones include: FNIGC sending out feedback tool, Regions creating RSS Advisory committees, consultations on content, FNIGC compiling feedback and creating the first draft of core questionnaire, analysis plan, consultations on questions, second questionnaire drafted by FNIGC, regional engagement, final draft, regional components, programming, testing, ethics reviews, hiring and training, BCRS. Ultimately, the group concluded that the deadline of July 2024 for data collection is not feasible, and a more

realistic, attainable timeline has us beginning data collection in March 2025. FNIGC will compile and revise the work plan/timeline and redistribute it to partners.

Creating Ethical Space for Mi'kmaq-led Genetic, Epigenetic, and other Biological Health Research in Nova Scotia

In collaboration with Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq, Pictou Landing First Nation (PLFN), University of Toronto, Thunderbird Foundation, Dalhousie University and Carleton University are carrying out a foundational community-based participatory research and training program to build capacity and create ethical space for biological research led by Mi'kmaq communities that integrates traditional knowledge and lived experience. The research and training will apply the two-eyed seeing, where the project will be approached from both a biomedical and an Indigenous lens, in order to create an ethical space to reduce the inherent risks in biological health research.

The training program and evaluation will take place over an estimated 10 weeks:

- Western science online training will take 7-8 hours.
- Indigenous Knowledge component (in person or virtual) will take up to 20 hours to complete.



TRAINING PROGRAM AND EVALUATION:

The Two-Eyed Seeing Training Program on Western Sciences and Indigenous Knowledges in Human Biological Research is an online and virtual training program. The program will include evaluation questions to assess knowledge, attitudes and interests before and after the training.

DIALOGUE/TALKING CIRCLE:

The Dialogue/Talking Circle is an in-person opportunity to review and discuss a set of guidelines and priorities for human biological research by and with Pictou Landing First Nation as well as to build consensus on a set of health research priorities.

The goals of the project are to:

THE GOALS OF THIS PROJECT ARE TO:

**REDUCE
RISKS OF
RESEARCH**

**IDENTIFY
RESEARCH
STRATEGIES**

**SUPPORT
INDIGENOUS-LED
BIOLOGICAL
HEALTH
RESEARCH**

The Dynamics of Health Inequalities Baseline Study

The Information Governance and Data Projects (IGDP) team, in partnership with Dr. Mohammad Hajizadeh from Dalhousie University, is currently engaging with community health leaders to determine the best focus area for this project. The aim is to address the existing health inequalities experienced by our on-reserve populations.

This collaborative effort seeks to produce a report investigating the extent and factors contributing to health disparities between Mi'kmaq and settler populations, as well as within and between First Nations communities in Canada and Atlantic Canada. The study will specifically examine the period from 2000 to 2017.

The primary objectives of this project are as follows:

1. Quantify the health inequalities over time between Mi'kmaq and settler populations. Additionally, analyze the dynamics of individual and macro-social factors that contribute to these observed disparities.
2. Quantify the health disparities over time among First Nations populations. This analysis will explore the dynamics of individual and macro-social factors contributing to these inequalities.
3. Quantify the socioeconomic inequalities in health within First Nations populations over time. Furthermore, analyze the dynamics of individual and macro-social factors that influence socioeconomic-related inequalities within First Nations groups.

To achieve these objectives, the study will utilize existing data from various sources, such as the Canadian Community Health Surveys, Aboriginal Peoples Surveys, Canadian Census Data, Atlantic First Nations Regional Health Surveys, and the First Nations Regional Early Childhood Education and Employment Survey. By leveraging these available datasets, the study aims to contribute to the current knowledge of health inequalities and social determinants of health in Canada.

The findings from this project will offer valuable insights to policymakers, enabling them to design effective strategies to reduce health inequalities in First Nations communities. The collaborative efforts between the IGDP department, Dr. Mohammad Hajizadeh, and community health leaders will work towards creating a more equitable and healthier future for the Mi'kmaq population in Nova Scotia and First Nations communities across Canada.

FINANCIALS

THE UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ
Consolidated Financial Statements
Year Ended March 31, 2023

Richard Hannem CPA Inc

THE UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ
Index to Consolidated Financial Statements
Year Ended March 31, 2023

	Page
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT	1 - 2
CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	
Consolidated Statement of Financial Position	3
Consolidated Statement of Operations	4
Consolidated Statement of Changes in Net Assets	5
Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows	6
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements	7 - 12
Schedule of Health Canada Programs Revenue and Expenditures <i>(Schedule 1)</i>	13-16
Schedule of Indigenous Services Canada Revenue and Expenditures - Advisory Services <i>(Schedule 2)</i>	17-18
Schedule of Indigenous Services Canada Revenue and Expenditures <i>(Schedule 3)</i>	19-20
Schedule of First Nations Information Governance Centre Revenue and Expenditures <i>(Schedule 4)</i>	22
Schedule of Other Projects Revenue and Expenditures <i>(Schedule 5)</i>	23
Consolidated Schedule of Other Projects Revenue and Expenditures (Continued) <i>(Schedule 5)</i>	24
Schedule of Revenue and Expenditures - Annex A (Health Canada - FNIIIB) <i>(Schedule 6)</i>	25-29
Schedule of Revenue and Expenditures - Annex A (ISC Recipient 1101) <i>(Schedule 7)</i>	30
Schedule of Revenue and Expenditures - Annex A (ISC Recipient 9113 - Advisory Services) <i>(Schedule 8)</i>	31-32

Richard Hannem CPA Inc

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of The Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq

Opinion

I have audited the consolidated financial statements of The Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (the Union), which comprise the consolidated statement of financial position as at March 31, 2023, the consolidated statement of operations and the consolidated statements of changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the consolidated financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the accompanying consolidated financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the consolidated financial position of the Union as at March 31, 2023, and the consolidated results of its operations and consolidated cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Consolidated Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Union in accordance with ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the consolidated financial statements in Canada, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Consolidated Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the consolidated financial statements in accordance with ASNPO, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of consolidated financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the consolidated financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Union's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Union or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Union's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Consolidated Financial Statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these consolidated financial statements.

(continues)

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Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of The Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (continued)

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Union's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Union's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the consolidated financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Union to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the consolidated financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the consolidated financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Sydney Mines, Nova Scotia
July 25, 2023

Richard Hannem
Chartered Professional Accountant

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THE UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ
Consolidated Statement of Financial Position
March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash	\$ 10,387,048	\$ 7,238,956
Accounts receivable (Note 3)	514,027	309,203
Prepaid expenses	29,246	-
	<u>10,930,321</u>	<u>7,548,159</u>
Leasehold improvements (Note 4)	<u>271,046</u>	<u>270,000</u>
	<u>\$ 11,201,367</u>	<u>\$ 7,818,159</u>
LIABILITIES		
Current		
Accounts payable	\$ 2,339,754	\$ 1,163,773
Deferred revenue (Note 6)	7,800,547	5,673,564
	<u>10,140,301</u>	<u>6,837,337</u>
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	<u>1,061,066</u>	<u>980,822</u>
	<u>\$ 11,201,367</u>	<u>\$ 7,818,159</u>

Contingent liability (Note 10)

Lease commitments (Note 12)

On behalf of the Board

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 Director

DocuSigned by:

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 Director

THE UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ
Consolidated Statement of Operations
Year Ended March 31, 2023

	Budget	2023	2022
Revenue			
Health Canada	\$ 11,000,000	\$ 11,211,094	\$ 8,103,019
Province of Nova Scotia	125,000	137,580	24,700
First Nations Information Governance Centre	1,000,000	1,038,536	769,527
Indigenous Services Canada	2,000,000	2,044,954	1,797,688
Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq	22,000	22,349	808
Atlantic Policy Congress	-	15,408	1,387
Canadian Partnership Against Cancer	-	-	224,283
Other	400,000	509,759	284,719
Nova Scotia Health Authority	-	-	12,972
Deferred revenue opening	5,673,564	5,673,564	3,805,509
Deferred revenue ending	(7,303,564)	(7,800,547)	(5,673,564)
	12,917,000	12,852,697	9,351,048
Expenses			
Accounting fees	25,000	25,000	25,000
Administration	145,000	-	144,750
Amortization	30,000	30,000	30,000
Award	3,000	2,500	4,000
Bad debts	-	-	13,679
Cleaning	35,000	32,557	31,732
Consulting fees	410,000	407,038	446,005
Equipment rental	37,000	35,255	9,559
HIV/AIDS Strategy	75,000	71,066	149,306
Insurance	40,000	36,156	3,152
Interest and bank charges	12,000	11,241	8,672
Meetings and conventions	230,000	220,420	65,374
Office	540,000	527,349	533,878
Professional fees	4,000	9,561	29,336
Rent	200,000	201,092	177,486
Service delivery	5,700,000	5,623,589	3,141,728
Salaries and wages	4,350,000	4,275,188	3,318,621
Supplies	100,000	104,032	82,498
Telephone	55,000	53,578	43,137
Traditional healer	111,000	110,919	127,280
Training	83,000	82,505	20,407
Travel	580,000	575,775	395,632
UOICSF	-	-	214,080
Youth gathering	78,000	78,000	78,000
	12,843,000	12,512,821	9,093,312
Subtotal	74,000	339,876	257,736
Clawback of current year surplus	-	(259,632)	(82,714)
Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ 74,000	\$ 80,244	\$ 175,022

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THE UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ
Consolidated Statement of Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 980,822	\$ 805,800
Excess of revenue over expenditures	<u>80,244</u>	<u>175,022</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 1,061,066</u>	<u>\$ 980,822</u>

THE UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ
Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows
Year Ended March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
Operating activities		
Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ 80,244	\$ 175,022
Item not affecting cash:		
Amortization of leasehold improvements	30,000	30,000
	<u>110,244</u>	<u>205,022</u>
Changes in non-cash working capital:		
Accounts receivable	(204,824)	292,225
Accounts payable	1,175,981	129,884
Deferred revenue	2,126,983	1,868,055
Prepaid expenses	(29,246)	-
	<u>3,068,894</u>	<u>2,290,164</u>
	<u>3,179,138</u>	<u>2,495,186</u>
Investing activity		
Increase in leasehold improvements	(31,046)	-
	<u>(31,046)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net change in cash and cash equivalents during the year	3,148,092	2,495,186
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	7,238,956	4,743,770
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	\$ 10,387,048	\$ 7,238,956



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