

# Our Health Counts Toronto

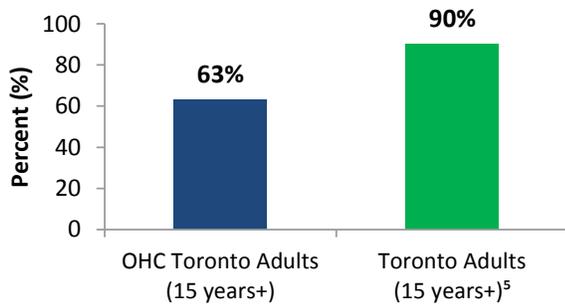
An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples in Toronto

## Adult Access to Health Care

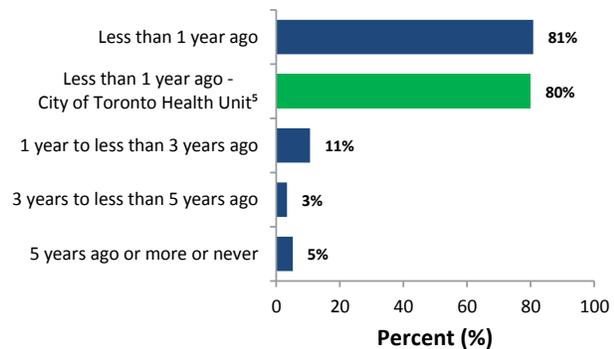
Lack of access to a regular health care provider and experiences of discrimination from providers are key barriers contributing to inequities in health service access for Indigenous people.<sup>1,2</sup> Indigenous people also face significant barriers due to lack of clarity in the roles of federal and provincial jurisdiction in provision of health services.<sup>3</sup> A previous OHC study demonstrated that urban Indigenous people are accessing emergency departments 2 times more than the general population.<sup>4</sup> This may be linked to poor access to primary and preventative care services.

### Primary Care

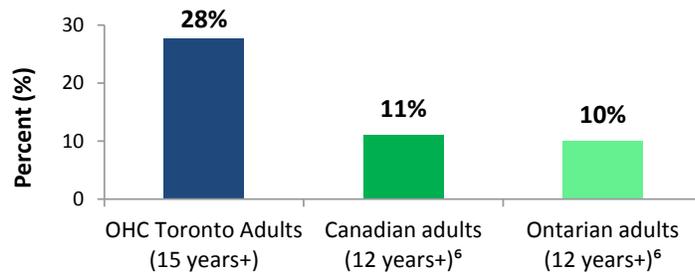
**66%** of Indigenous adults in Toronto have a regular family doctor or nurse practitioner. In comparison, **90%** of adults in Toronto have a regular medical doctor.<sup>5</sup>



While less Indigenous adults have a regular family doctor/nurse practitioner, many have seen a doctor or nurse practitioner in the last year:



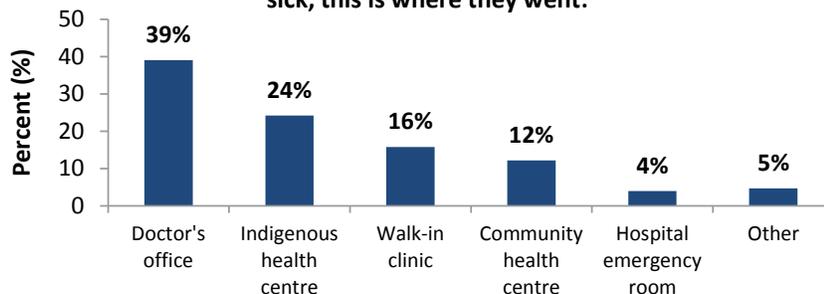
**Over 1 in 4** Indigenous adults in Toronto had unmet health needs in the past 12 months.



Reasons why these needs were not met:

- Inability to get transportation
- Inability to afford transportation
- Lack of trust in the health care provider

When Indigenous adults in Toronto needed health advice or were sick, this is where they went:



**22%** of Indigenous adults in Toronto do not have a regular place to go for health advice or when they are sick.



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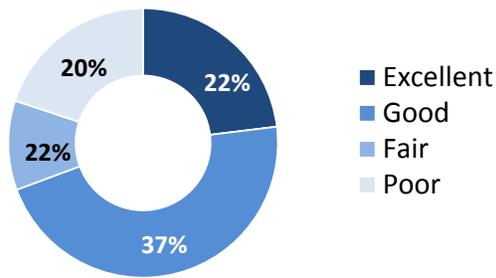
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## Adult Access to Health Care

### Emergency Care

**46%** (1 in 2) of Indigenous adults in Toronto self-reported accessing emergency care in the past 12 months, compared to an estimated **19%** of Ontarians.<sup>7</sup>

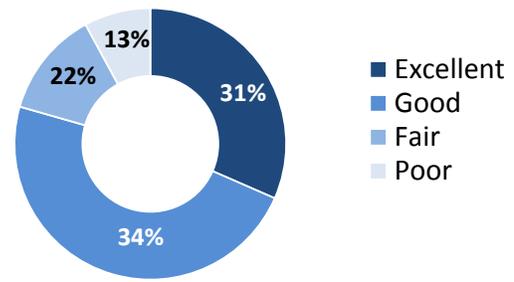
Of people who accessed emergency care, **42%** rated the quality of care as fair or poor:



### Hospital Care

**44%** (over 2 in 5) of Indigenous adults in Toronto self-reported having spent one night or more in a hospital in the past 5 years.

Of people who accessed hospital care, **21%** rated the quality of care as fair or poor:



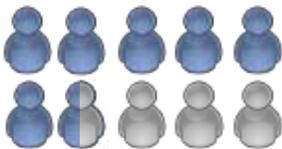
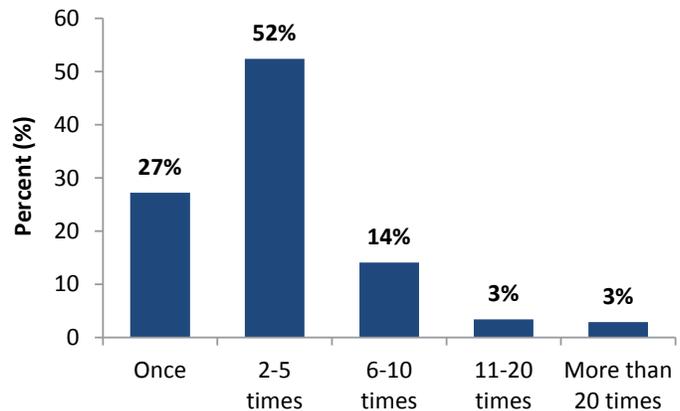
## Experiences of Discrimination in the Health Care System

**28%** (over 1 in 4)

Of Indigenous adults reported they have been treated unfairly by health care professionals because of their Indigenous identity. 26% of Indigenous adults in London (8 - superscripted) and 13% of First Nations adults in Hamilton (4 - superscripted) were treated unfairly by health care professionals because of their Indigenous identity.<sup>4</sup>

Of adults in Toronto that experienced unfair treatment, **72%** indicated that it occurred more than once in the past 5 years.

Number of times Indigenous adults experienced unfair treatment by health care professionals in the past 5 years:



**71%**

of Indigenous adults in Toronto said that experiences of racism from health care professionals prevented, stopped or delayed them from returning to health services.

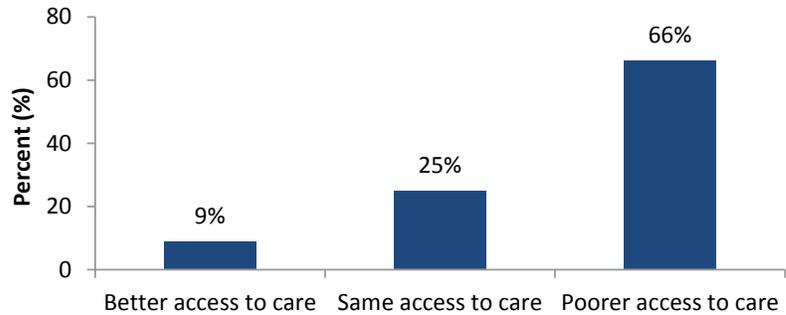
## Adult Access to Health Care

### Access to Health Care Services



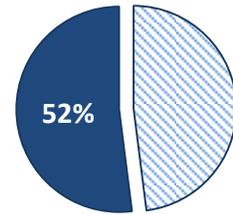
**12%** of Indigenous adults who currently live in Toronto, but were not born in Toronto, moved to Toronto for access to health care.

**63%** of Indigenous adults who have ever experienced discrimination by a health care professional rated their overall access to health care services as poorer compared to the general Canadian population.



**29%** of Indigenous adults felt that there were **inadequate community resources serving Indigenous people in Toronto** for primary health care (family doctors, nurse practitioners).

In the past 12 months, **over half** of the Indigenous adults in Toronto believed their ability to engage in preventative health activities has been affected by financial hardship.



#### Policy Implications

##### Implement TRC Call to Action 23:

We call upon all levels of government to provide cultural safety training for all healthcare professionals.

##### Additional Recommendations:

City of Toronto, provincial and federal policy makers work in partnership with urban Indigenous peoples and organizations to:

- Address barriers in accessing programs and services, including financial, physical access and transportation barriers
- Develop and implement programs and services to improve access to Indigenous ceremonies and traditional medicines
- Create dedicated spaces in hospitals and clinics for traditional cultural practices and ceremonies.
- Provide funding for anti-racism and cultural safety training across the healthcare system, expanding availability and continuing education.

#### Definitions

Indigenous adults: persons self-identifying as Indigenous such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or other Nation aged 15 years and older living or using services in the City of Toronto. Unmet health needs: Needed health care services but did not receive them.

Population based estimates were created using respondent driven sampling (see Methods and Design Factsheet for more details)

#### Sources

1. Allan & Smylie (2015); 2. Browne et al. (2011); 3. Lavoie (2013); 4. Smylie et al. (2011); 5. Statistics Canada (2014a); 6. Statistics Canada (2014b); 7. Canadian Institute for Health Information (2015/2016);

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## Child Access to Health Care

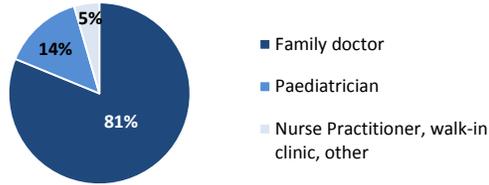
Due to a lack of ethnic identifiers, there is a gap in data on health care utilization among Indigenous children in Canada.<sup>1,2</sup> Given the known health disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people,<sup>3</sup> there is a need to explore access to health care among Indigenous children. Similar to Indigenous adults, the health disparities experienced by Indigenous children are linked to inequitable access to care and colonial policies which continue to impact health

### Primary Care

**95%** of Indigenous children in Toronto have a regular health care provider who is familiar with their health and medical history.

In the past year, **90%** of Indigenous children in Toronto have seen a health care provider, such as a doctor, paediatrician or nurse practitioner. This is similar to **88%** of children in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

Family doctors and paediatricians are the primary health care providers for Indigenous children in Toronto:



### Specialist Care

**27%** of Indigenous children in Toronto have been referred to a specialist in the past year.

**33%** of parents of Indigenous children that were referred to a specialist reported encountering barriers when trying to get an appointment.

Barriers included:

- Could not afford transportation
- Unable to arrange transportation

### Unmet Health Needs

**8%** of Indigenous parents reported that there was a time in the past 12 months when they felt their child needed health care services, but did not receive them.

Barriers included:

- Lack of trust in health care provider
- Could not afford transport
- Long waiting list
- Care needed was not covered by Non-Insured Health Benefits

### Policy Implications

#### Implement TRC Call to Action 23:

We call upon all levels of government to provide cultural safety training for all healthcare professionals.

#### Additional Recommendations:

City of Toronto, provincial and federal policy makers work in partnership with urban Indigenous peoples and organizations to:

- Address barriers in accessing specialist care of Indigenous children
- Address barriers in accessing programs and services, including financial, physical access and transportation barriers
- Provide funding for anti-racism and cultural safety training across the healthcare system, expanding availability and continuing education.

#### Definitions

Parents/guardians of Indigenous children or Indigenous children: parents/guardians of persons 1 to 14 years self-identified as Indigenous by their parent or guardian, such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit or other Indigenous nations, living or using services in the City of Toronto

Population based estimates were created using respondent driven sampling (see Methods and Design Factsheet for more details)

#### Sources

1. Smylie & Adomako (2009); 2. Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (2011) ; 3. UNICEF (2009); 4. Allan & Smylie (2015)



Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto



For the full OHC Toronto report visit: [www.wellivinghouse.com](http://www.wellivinghouse.com)

# Our Health Counts Toronto

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## Adult Access to Health Care Reference

Our Health Counts Toronto is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Toronto and is part of the largest Indigenous population health study in Canada. Participants were selected using respondent-driven sampling, a statistical method which uses social networks in the community to recruit Indigenous people living in the city.

## Survey Question

**RDS Prevalence Estimate**  
(95% Confidence Interval)

### Do you have a regular family doctor and/or nurse practitioner?

Yes	62.6% (54.6, 70.5)
No	37.4% (29.5, 45.4)

### When did you last see a doctor or nurse practitioner?

Less than 1 year ago	80.8% (73.9, 87.6)
1 year to less than 3 years ago	10.6% (5.6, 15.7)
3 years to less than 5 years ago	3.4% (0.4, 6.4)
5 years ago or more or never	5.2% (0.6, 9.9)

### In the previous 12 months, was there a time you felt you needed health care services but did not receive them?

Yes	27.7% (20.0, 35.4)
No	72.3% (64.7, 80.0)

### Is there a place that you usually go to when you are sick or need advice about your health?

Yes	78.4% (71.5, 85.4)
No	21.6% (14.6, 28.5)

### What kind of place is this?

Doctor's office	39.1% (31.0, 47.2)
Indigenous health centre	24.2% (16.5, 31.9)
Community health centre	12.2% (6.2, 18.3)
Walk-in clinic	15.8% (8.9, 22.7)
Hospital emergency room	4.0% (2.0, 6.0)
Telephone health line, hospital outpatient clinic, other	4.7% (2.1, 7.2)

### Have you accessed emergency care for yourself in the past 12 months?

Yes	46.1% (38.3, 53.8)
No	53.9% (46.2, 61.7)

### How would you rate the quality of the emergency care you received at the time?

Excellent	22.0% (14.7, 29.3)
Good	36.5% (25.6, 47.4)
Fair	22.2% (11.6, 32.7)
Poor	19.3% (9.1, 29.6)

### Have you spent one or more nights as a patient admitted in a hospital at any time in the past 5 years?

Yes	44.4% (36.8, 52.0)
No	55.6% (48.0, 63.2)

### Thinking of your most recent hospital stay, how would you rate the quality of the hospital care you received at that time?

Excellent	30.9% (20.5, 41.3)
Good	34.0% (24.8, 43.3)
Fair	21.7% (11.5, 31.9)
Poor	13.4% (7.1, 19.6)

### Have you ever been treated unfairly by a health care professional because you are Indigenous?

Yes	27.9% (20.3, 35.6)
No	72.1% (64.5, 79.7)

### In the past 5 years how frequently has this happened?

Once	27.2% (11.4, 43.0)
2-5 times	52.4% (34.9, 70.0)
6-10 times	14.1% (0.0, 29.6)
11-20 times	3.4% (0.0, 7.3)
More than 20 times	2.9% (0.2, 5.6)

### In the past 5 years, did this stop/prevent/delay you from returning to health services?

Yes	71.4% (58.0, 84.9)
No	28.6% (15.1, 42.0)

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CIHR IRSC

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## Adult Access to Health Care Reference

### Survey Question

**RDS Prevalence Estimate**  
(95% Confidence Interval)

**What were your reasons for moving to Toronto?**  
Healthcare 11.8% (6.6, 16.9)

**How would you rate the overall level of access to health care services available to Indigenous peoples in Toronto compared to Canadians generally?**

Same level of access 25.0% (9.2, 40.8)  
Less access 66.2% (50.0, 82.5)  
Better access 8.8% (2.6, 15.0)

**Do you think there are adequate community resources serving Indigenous people in Toronto to address...Primary health care**  
Yes 48.1% (40.2, 55.9)  
No 28.8% (22.7, 34.9)  
23.1% (16.7, 29.6)

**Over the past 12 months, do you believe that your ability to engage in preventative health activities has been affected by financial hardship?**  
Yes 52.3% (44.4, 60.3)  
No 47.7% (39.8, 55.6)

## Child Access to Health Care Reference

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### Survey Question

**RDS Prevalence Estimate**  
(95% Confidence Interval)

**Does your child have a regular health care provider who is familiar with their health and medical history?**  
Yes 95.3% (92.2, 98.3)  
No 4.7% (1.7, 7.8)

**Which is your child's primary health care provider?**  
Family doctor 81.2% (73.5, 88.8)  
Paediatrician 14.3% (7.6, 21.1)  
Nurse practitioner, walk-in clinic, other 4.5% (0.9, 8.1)

**Has your child been to see a health care provider within the last year?**  
Yes 90.4% (84.6, 96.1)  
No 9.7% (3.9, 15.4)

**Has your child been referred to see a medical specialist in the past 12 months?**  
Yes 26.9% (16.4, 37.5)  
No 73.1% (62.5, 83.7)

**Did you encounter barriers in getting your child to this specialist appointment?**  
Yes 32.9% (8.8, 57.0)\*  
No 67.1% (43.0, 91.2)\*

**In the previous 12 months, was there a time you felt your child needed health care services but did not receive them?**  
Yes 7.6% (3.0, 12.1)  
No 92.5% (87.9, 97.0)

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