



Health Canada's Strategy Against Tuberculosis for First Nations On-Reserve

The Strategy

Vision

Sustainable, Equitable and Effective Tuberculosis (TB) Control

Goal

To significantly reduce the incidence and burden of tuberculosis in First Nations on-reserve.

Health Canada's Strategy Against TB is a technical tool for health care professionals, administrators and Health Canada staff working with First Nations on-reserve. The Strategy:

- Aligns with the Canadian Tuberculosis Standards.
- Aligns with the guidance document currently being developed for TB prevention and control programs in Canada, a process being led by the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- Increases focus on community-based initiatives and targeting TB prevention and control activities in First Nation communities with high TB incidence, and in remote and isolated communities. It also targets activities for people at greater risk for TB, such as in people living with HIV/AIDS, infants and young children, people with chronic medical conditions, mental health issues and/or addictions, and people with untreated latent TB infection.
- Aims to develop and strengthen partnerships at all levels of the health system to ensure those populations have seamless access to TB services and to address the underlying factors that influence the spread of TB.
- Provides greater emphasis on program monitoring and evaluation.

What is tuberculosis (TB)?

- Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by bacteria that spread through the air when someone coughs, sneezes or, to a lesser degree, talks.
- When TB enters the lungs, the immune system tries to either kill or contain the bacteria.
- TB that remains contained or inactive in the body is called latent TB infection; it does not make a person feel sick and cannot be spread to others.
- If the TB bacteria become active, the latent TB infection develops into active TB disease. If this happens, the person will likely feel sick and may spread the germs to others.
- The risk of developing active TB disease increases in people with other diseases or conditions that weaken the immune system, such as in persons living with HIV/AIDS.
- If left untreated, active TB can lead to death.
- TB can be cured with multiple antibiotics taken over the course of many months for a full cure.

Main Themes of the Strategy

There are three themes to the renewed strategy:

Preventing, Diagnosing, and Managing TB

Objectives:

- align with the Canadian Tuberculosis Standards
- decrease transmission of TB
- recognize the importance of cultural competency
- manage data on TB in a consistent and standardized manner
- address professional staff shortages and high staff turnover rates

Targeting Populations at Greatest Risk for TB

Objectives:

- identify sub-populations that are at greatest risk of TB
- work with communities to provide targeted, enhanced TB programming to populations with high rates of or at greatest risk of TB

Developing and Maintaining Partnerships

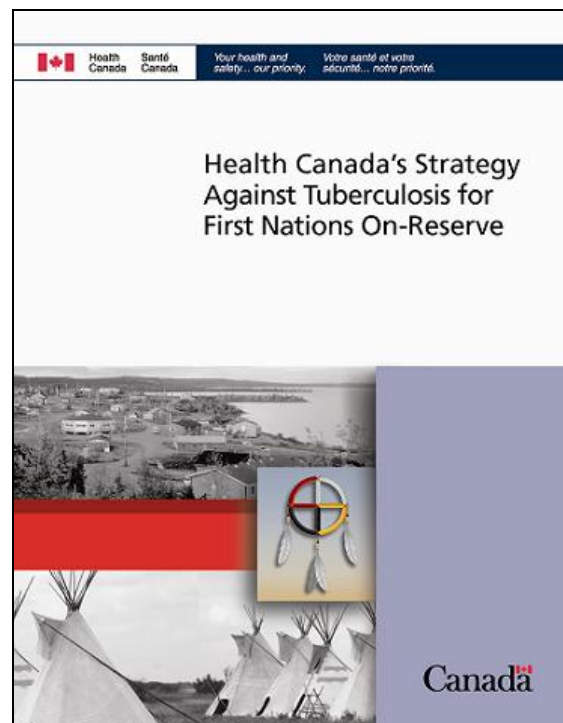
Objectives:

- foster community involvement and shared ownership of TB prevention and control
- clarify roles and responsibilities through stronger partnerships and collaborations with provinces and communities to provide seamless access to TB program services
- increase awareness of TB and related issues
- align TB programming with other public health programs and related activities
- address the link with the social determinants of health through partnerships and collaboration with other federal entities, provinces and First Nations leadership

Background

Health Canada assures tuberculosis prevention and control services are either provided or accessible to First Nations on-reserve.

To improve activities aimed at reducing the incidence and burden of TB in these populations, Health Canada recently updated its National Tuberculosis Elimination Strategy. The renewed Strategy, now titled *Health Canada's Strategy Against Tuberculosis for First Nations On-Reserve* was developed in collaboration with First Nation and Inuit organizations and communities, provincial partners, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and TB experts.



For more information on the Strategy visit:

www.health.gc.ca/tuberculosis