
CHIEFS OF ONTARIO HEALTH CO-ORDINATION UNIT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

CHIEFS OF ONTARIO OFFICE:

The activities of the Chiefs of Ontario are governed by the Political Confederacy (PC) in response to mandates given by the Chiefs in Assembly. The purpose of the Chiefs of Ontario office is to enable the PTO's and Independent First Nations to discuss and decide on regional, provincial, federal and national priorities affecting First Nations and to provide a unified voice on these issues. The main objectives of the Chiefs of Ontario office is to facilitate the discussion, planning, implementation, coordination and evaluation of all local, regional, provincial, federal and national matters affecting the First Nations in Ontario.

COO HEALTH COORDINATION UNIT:

PURPOSE:

The Health Co-ordination Unit (HCU) is a technical advisory body operating under the umbrella of the Chiefs of Ontario. It is comprised of the Health Directors of the PTO's and one representative from the Independent First Nations. The Unit is supported by the coordinating capacity of the Chiefs of Ontario office. The Health Coordination Unit is responsible to the Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health (OCCOH), Political Confederacy and the Ontario Chiefs in Assembly.

The Health Coordination Unit identifies health issues, prepares briefing papers and highlights health strategies that require political support and action.

BACKGROUND:

As the federal and provincial governments initiate various strategies and programs to increase the ability and capacity of First Nations to deliver health care at the local level, it is imperative that the Health Co-ordination Unit facilitates and supports political and technical processes so that effective strategies are in place to respond to the government in a timely and efficient manner.

MANDATE:

The broad mandate of the Health Co-ordination Unit is as follows:

1. To support the independent efforts of the PTO/IFN Health Directors in:
 - a. assisting First Nations to plan and develop health services for their communities;

- b. resolving issues between legislation and regulations that impact First Nation's control of health services;
2. To develop strategies, policies and position papers on health issues for leadership and PC Health Portfolio, and the Chiefs in Assembly, and establish short and long term planning and priorities for the OCCOH;
3. To initiate consultation and advocate processes for the attainment of First Nation control of health and facilitate the roll up of those PTO consultations inclusive of providing recommendations for Regional Allocations with supporting rationale.
4. To develop a working and information sharing relationship with other First Nation and non-Aboriginal health organizations in order to share best practices;
5. To develop and maintain an information sharing relationship with the Ontario Indian Social Services Council, and to continue an effective coordination of Ontario Wide issues and the mandate as directed by the political process are followed through;
6. To engage in regular intergovernmental liaison with federal and provincial government officials, AFN and other committees, to facilitate information access for First Nations by providing reports to PTO's/IFN's on those meetings;
7. To report and make recommendations to the OCCOH, PC and the Chiefs in Assembly regarding conflicts between government policy, programs and legislation and First Nation initiatives in the health area:
 - a. the development of strategies and position papers;
 - b. overall progress reports of the Health Coordination Unit;
 - c. the resource requirements of the Health Coordination Unit;
 - d. any operational matters;
8. To develop new or re-profile management committees/groups in Ontario for First Nations health programming.
9. Accountability:

The HCU is accountable to the Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health (OCCOH). Each HCU member will report to and provide briefings to their respective OCCOH member prior to each CCOH meeting, as required.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEALTH COORDINATION UNIT AND STAFF

ADVOCACY:

- To ensure that lobby and advocacy efforts as directed by the Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health are carried out;
- To maintain up-to-date information on First Nations health conditions and provide information upon request;
- To ensure that First Nations are adequately represented in initiatives as they effect First Nations health;
- To ensure that First Nations health issues and concerns are raised in various forums and processes by political leaders or others;
- To advocate, support and assist First Nations in the development or maintenance of regional health strategies, as required;
- To monitor recommendations made by the Chiefs Committee on Health to ensure effective implementation.
- Ensure that meeting packages/agenda are sent out prior to meetings.

ANALYSIS:

- To analyse new and emerging Federal/Provincial health policies, legislation, programs and research to determine its impact on First Nations aboriginal and treaty rights in health, and to prepare briefings for the Chiefs Committee on Health;
- To provide technical advice and assistance to the Chiefs Committee;
- To develop recommendations and options as required for the Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health and Political Confederacy Health Portfolio member.

STRUCTURE:

- HCU is comprised of the Health Directors of the provincial and territorial organizations (PTO's) and a representative from the Independent First Nations.

- HCU is supported and coordinated through the Chiefs of Ontario office by a Coordinator/Policy Analyst and by a Health Assistant.
- HCU reports its decisions and brings forward recommendations directly to the OCCOH/PC of the Chiefs of Ontario.
- The Ontario Health Portfolio holder is an ex-officio member of the Health Coordination Unit.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES:

Principles:

- The HCU will strive to operate on a consensus basis, in the interest of developing Ontario-wide positions on issues. Consensus is defined as agreement by all members of a group with regard to decisions or direction. In cases where consensus is not reached, recommendations will go forward, including the recommendation of the non-consenting party. The views of the non-consenting party will be made known.
- Annual reports will be provided by the HCU for review at annual Assemblies.
- The autonomy of First Nations and regions to assert their own direction and pursue programs at their own pace will be respected by the HCU. Regionalized approaches will not preclude coordination between regions where priorities, agendas, and approaches are determined to be consistent and compatible with individual community initiatives.
- HCU members will play an active role in bringing forward and discussing issues, stating concerns relative to their communities and regions, and giving direction for purposes of formulating the Unit's decisions or recommendations.
- HCU members will strive to volunteer their services to assist with and offset the coordinator's workload on specific health issues.

Procedures:

- The HCU will meet on a regular basis, to be determined by the members. The Health Coordinator/Policy Analyst from the Chiefs of Ontario office are required to attend all HCU meetings.
- A minimum of three Directors or their designates will constitute a quorum for purposes of conducting meetings to discuss issues. The HCU will make recommendations/ decisions on broad overarching issues by discussion and achieving consensus on Ontario-wide positions to take relative to these issues.

When a coordinated and united position is not feasible due to regional differences, timing or priorities; the minutes and any recommendations/position papers will so reflect regional approaches.

- The Coordinator will convene meetings at the request of the HCU members and the minutes of all meetings will be recorded. The Coordinator will notify absent members of all decisions made.
- Issues defined within the HCU agenda are reported directly from the Coordinator/Policy Analyst to the OCCOH. The HCU will respect individual Directors' accountability to their Executive Directors and Chiefs/Councils.
- As noted under Principles, the HCU respects the autonomy of First Nations in asserting their own direction and approach to all issues and programs, including internal First Nation and regional processes for reporting on and ensuring accountability to communities on Health issues.
- The Co-ordination Unit shall monitor expenditures related to health initiatives and activity approved by OCCOH. Chiefs of Ontario office will provide financial statements to the Co-ordination Unit for review, quarterly, with a review bi-annually.

EVALUATION MECHANISM

Evaluation of the activity of the Coordination Unit will take place every two years. Evaluation will be based on the HCU's level of success in collectively achieving strategic goals and objectives as set out in a strategic plan. An independent contractor will be retained for that purpose.

Revised and approved by:

Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health
Monday, November 19, 2012

Approved by:

Political Confederacy
PC Meeting November 26, 2012