



GIISHKAANDAGO'IKWE  
HEALTH SERVICES

# Annual Report

2023-2024



Cover Art  
“Giishkaandago’lkwe”  
Leah Arch, Ojibways of Onigaming

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We wish to acknowledge and thank Leah Arch, for sharing her image of Giishkaandago’lkwe with the organization.

We will treasure the gift of this image and remember our teaching of Giishkaandago’lkwe from our Elder, who shared that when he was in the bush, he looked at all the trees that stood together; it was obviously clear that no matter how different the trees are, they all stood together, worked together for a common cause – this is how everything became clear where the name of the agency was concerned, the agency is working towards a common goal – to help the Anishinaabeg. No matter how different the people are within’ the agency, they come together for the betterment of the Anishinaabeg.

Cedar has two spirits as all of us do, a male and female spirit, and it is the ikwewag (women) part of the giishkaandag who offered their spirit to help the organization. The name of the organization will be Giishkaandago’lkwe.

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# Core Values



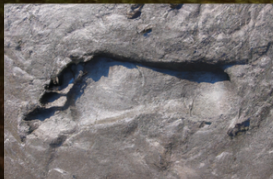
**Nibwaakaawin**  
*Wisdom*



**Zoongide'ewin**  
*Bravery*



**Manaaji'idiwin**  
*Respect*



**Gwekwaadiziwin**  
*Honesty*



**Zaagi'idiwin**  
*Love*



**Debwewin**  
*Truth*



**Dabasendizowin**  
*Humility*



**Boonendamowin**  
*Forgiveness*

## Vision

**Mino Ayawin**  
*Good Health*

## Mission

We are a leader in innovative health care guided by the Grandmother and Grandfather teachings of the Anishinaabeg inspiring knowledge, strength, and empowerment for the purpose of lifelong mino ayawin (good health)



# Board of Directors

## Executive Committee



Cheyenne Vandermeer  
*Chair*  
Couchiching



Garry Windigo  
*Vice-Chair*  
Nigigoonsiminikaaning



Deborah Ludeman  
*Treasurer*  
Mishkosiminiziibiing



Karen Geyshick  
*Secretary*  
Gakijiwanong  
Anishinaabe Nation



Mariah Morrison  
Mitaanjiigamiing



Chief Wayne Smith  
Naicatchewenin



Gerald Johnson  
Chima'aganing



Clarissa Kelly  
Ojibways of  
Onigaming



Chief Marcel Medicine-Horton  
Manidoo Baa  
Witi Gong



Carl Big George  
Anishinaabeg of  
Naongashiing



# Elders Advisory Council



Hazel Copenace  
Ojibways of  
Onigaming



Edna Morrison  
Mitaanjiigamiing



Shirley Atwell  
Nigigoonsiminikaaning



Mookii Morrison  
Manidoo Baa Witi Gong



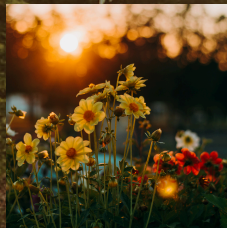
Josephine Wood  
Anishinaabeg of  
Naongashiing



Margaret Ottertail  
Gakijiwanong  
Anishinaabe Nation



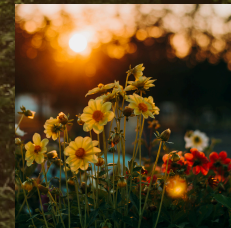
Florence Yerxa  
Couchiching



Dennis Smith  
Naicatchewenin



Vacant  
Mishkosiminiziibiing



Mike Kabatay  
Chima'aganing





In loving memory of

*Wayne Yerxa*

It is with heavy hearts that Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services wishes to remember and honour one of our organization's legacy's, Wayne Yerxa. We will be forever grateful for his artistic talents and the gift of our organization logo, Inaabandamokwe, in which we hang proudly throughout our organization. The logo came through a dream and was gifted through ceremony and it was Wayne who brought the image to life. Inaabandamokwe is the Blue Lady's name and it is believed that she protects and carries health and wellness to the communities, children and families and that she looks over the workers. There is also a man in the logo and it is believed he is there to represent balance as you need both for balance. Wayne's memory and legacy will live on through Inaabandamokwe and our organization. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time.

Apane go giga-kwiinawenimigoo  
Until we see you again, we will always miss you.



# From Our CEO & Board of Directors

*Kayla Caul-Chartier, Chief Executive Officer*

*Boozhoo,*

As we reflect on another year of activity for Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services, there were many exciting initiatives and shared accomplishments to highlight and we are grateful to have the opportunity to share them within our annual report.

At Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services, the heart of everything we do is to provide quality, compassionate care to help our community members achieve Mino ayawin (Good Health). Our work is driven by our amazing clients, their families and the communities we serve.



We are honoured to continue to contribute to the health and wellness of our communities and are pleased to share that the organization undertook important work to finalize our new 5-year strategic plan. The plan was created with direct input of voices of the member communities, employees, Elders, Chiefs and Board of Directors. We are grateful and offer our sincere appreciation to all who took part in the plans' development and hope that each contributor sees their voice in the direction and role in helping us reach our strategic goals. The new plan builds on past accomplishments and is a record of the organizations aspirations regarding the work to be completed over the next five years.

As an organization we believe in the importance of ongoing quality improvement and education so that we can be resilient and responsive to the evolving needs of our clients and communities. It is recognized that this commitment begins with the organization's leadership in order for the organization to achieve success. We are pleased to share that in the spring of 2023-2024 the Board of Directors participated in governance training, while also updating the corporate by-laws and governance policy manual.

The organization continues to seek equitable supports to meet the growing needs of our communities, prioritizing community-based, comprehensive health programs and addressing key areas such as mental health and addictions support. An equitable and sustainable funding model is necessary in order to support the organization's commitment to improving health and wellness services that support better health outcomes for the clients we serve. Throughout the 2023-2024 year, we worked to prepare for the renewal of our block funding agreement with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). We are pleased to share that through these preparations the organization will be entering into a 10 year block funding agreement in the upcoming year. We celebrate this achievement as a first step forwards in obtaining more predictable and sustainable funds that will better support our programs and services.



With the continued growth of the organization, the development of a capital building remains a priority in order to improve service coordination and operational efficiencies. Proposal writing and lobbying efforts with funders continue, along with the completion of a functional program to move this very important project towards its next phase of development.

This year the organization was grateful for the opportunity to host the Honorable Minister Patty Hadju as she made her announcement for the development of the Wiidookodaadiwin Healing Lodge, which will provide a place of refuge for those most vulnerable with supportive shelter, mental health programming, case management/system navigation, transition focused planning through a bi-cultural and trauma informed care lens. This is an exciting addition to the compliment of services that Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services is able to provide.

Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services remains an active partner within the Rainy River District Ontario Health Team, which remains focused on bettering the health care experience for clients and their families within the Rainy River District. Through strong and collaborative relationships with our various partners, we continue to work together to support our Anishinaabe communities in a timely and responsive manner.

On behalf of Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services' leadership, we would like to acknowledge and offer our sincere appreciation to all of our employees. It is your invaluable contributes that make Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services the place that our clients, families and community members can rely on for their care needs. We would also like to recognize and thank our community leaders and Elders Advisory Council for your devoted efforts and contributions to promoting health and wellness for our members and for always supporting the organization to continue to strive to achieve our vision of Mino Ayawin (Good Health).

In closing, we would like to invite you to look back on this past year and take a moment to celebrate each other's successes. A lot has been accomplished this past year - we have seen great success, established momentum and assembled a creative, dedicated team at Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services to carry us well into the future.

# Corporate Highlights

## *Quality Improvement & Client Safety*

During the 2023-2024 we accomplished a number of quality improvement and client safety initiatives including:

- the development of a naloxone stock inventory and tracking system in our employee portal for cross department naloxone dispensing efforts
- increased naloxone distribution efforts across the organization with 260 kits being distributed
- enhanced cultural competency of employees across the organization through access to traditional teachings, ceremony, and activities such as bi-monthly teachings at all staff meetings, ribbon skirt/shirt making, traditional parenting, wild rice processing, and sage gathering and processing
- the revision of our client safety standard to reflect cultural competency and humility
- research and demo incident report management systems with capabilities to store, track, process, and report trends for committees to Quality Improvement Committee; the portal is currently in development
- the creation of an inventory of fall prevention equipment as well as a policy and procedure for annual fall prevention equipment maintenance.

## *Corporate Committees*

### *Infection Prevention & Control*

The committee has worked hard in the 2023-2024 year to ensure our organization continues to follow IPAC best practices including the enhancement of our site audit procedure which outlines the checklist for IPAC related items for all office locations. Education and awareness efforts this year were focused on respiratory illnesses as well as the importance of proper hand hygiene techniques in minimizing risk of illness and infection. The committee is also committed to incorporating Anishinaabemowin in hand hygiene education, this work will continue into the next fiscal year.





## Medication Management

The Medication Management Committee worked diligently to identify policies and procedures related to medication management that would apply to the entire organization to become part of a Medication Management Policy and Procedure Manual, thereby enabling all medication related protocols and information to be easily located in one place. The work required careful review and collaboration by the medication management committee across programs to amalgamate program level policy and procedure and in some cases the complete revision of existing ones. The predicted release to all employees is in the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The committee also implemented medication management boards at all office locations to display important alerts, trends, and medication management committee updates which are audited regularly.

## National Day For Truth and Reconciliation

2023 was the second year Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services partnered with a number of other area organizations to host a series of educational and commemorative events in honour of all residential school survivors and those who did not make it home. Events were held during the course of a week and included an opening flag raising ceremony, Anishinaabe teachings, orange shirt beading, tobacco and tobacco pouch teachings, Sweat Lodge Ceremony, and a drum social. The "Every Child Matters" Awareness Walk has become an annual event which sees a large attendance turn out each year. On September 30th, 2023, we also hosted a Sunrise Ceremony followed by a breakfast. Following the Sunrise Ceremony, a list of previously unidentified children's names were read aloud and honoured at the St. Margaret's Residential School monument site. Increasing awareness and education about the effects residential school had on our Anishinaabeg communities continues to be a priority of ours and we are honoured to continue working with our partner organizations to host events, ceremonies, and teachings.



# Finance and Administration

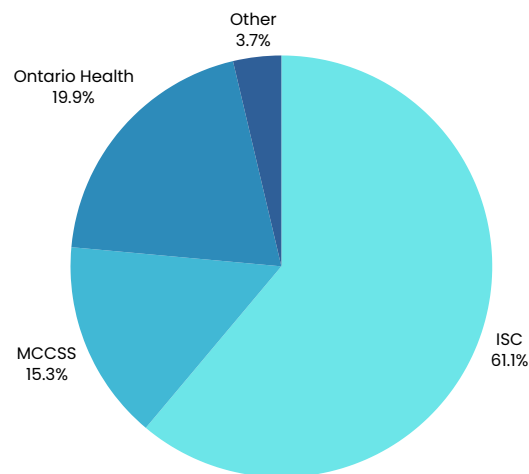
*Stacy Hakkala, Director of Finance and Administration*

## Finance

This year marked quite a few changes within our finance team at Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services. We added an additional full-time permanent payroll administrator, as well as an Accounts Payable Administrator due to the growth within the organization and anticipated growth in the future. We hired a new Director of Finance and Administration, who started with the organization in August 2023. This year has been a year of learning and growth for our department as our new team members settled into their roles with the remainder of the Finance Team.

We are continually striving to provide fair compensation to our employees and in December we were able to provide our employees with a 5% wage increase to help them combat the increased cost of living. Our employees are our greatest asset and it was wonderful to be able to provide them with this increase at a time when inflation rates have driven the cost of living expenses to an all-time high.

Although the organization received some increases to some of our base funding this year to assist with the rising cost of living; unfortunately these increases were minimal and did not match the increased costs associated with program operations. We are pleased to share that we did succeed in balancing our budgets even with the increased cost of living.



A total of \$20,618,938 in funding was received in 2023-2024. Our funders include:

- Indigenous Services Canada (\$12,504,432)
- Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services (\$3,137,626)
- Ontario Health (\$4,064,576)
- Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (\$158,000)
- Other (\$754,304)

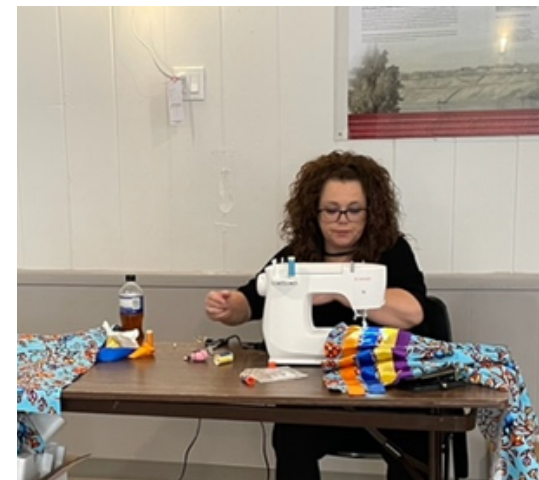


# Administration

This year marked some struggles within our administration department as with the current competitive job market caused us to operate with approximately half of the Administrative Assistants that we required. We struggled to recruit in almost every program for these positions. This is largely a result of the competitive job market and the organization not being able to match salaries that are offered elsewhere. In order to provide the much needed support, the organization entered into a contract with virtual assistant support and continued to recruit until the positions could be filled. This struggle has been one of the driving forces in sparking an internal/external review of our salary structure that commenced this year that should be complete by the end of 2024.

Effective communication within our organization and outside is something we are continually striving to improve upon. One of the projects under took this year was to update the organization's corporate communication documents, which included establishing updated logos, a branding kit, and communication templates in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. As a result of this work, we have updated our newsletters, Quarterly Service Reports, Letters, Memos and Website with the new branding material.

With the addition of a new HR Director, one of the changes to the staffing in the administration department was the transfer of the Cultural Coordinator from Administration to the new HR department.



# Information Technology

This year marked several highlights in the area of Information Technology including the following:

- Addition of a new physical server
- Upgrade to our WIFI system and access points
- Installation and training with all employee of a new secure print software
- Installation of our new cooling system and temperature monitoring unit for server room
- Established Remote Desktop Responsibility Policy
- Established Reference Manual for the development of Corporate and Program Forms
- Launched new Employee Portal
- New IT Assistant hired (June 2023) and then transitioned into IT Administrator in winter of 2023
- 642 IT tickets responded to in 2023/2024 that were entered into new portal system



None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the employees in the Finance, Administration and IT area. Thank you to a wonderful team!

# Human Resources

*Dina Gardiman, Director of Human Resources*

Boozhoo,

I am honoured to celebrate with you the remarkable accomplishments of this dedicated team. 2023/24 saw significant strides in the Human Resources Department by ensuring competitive compensation, enhanced recruitment and retention strategies and promoting safety, wellness and cultural activities. In an effort to maintain and enhance employee retention and remain competitive in the labour market, our organization implemented the following initiatives/policy changes:

## Salary Review and Job Evaluation

Conducted a comprehensive salary and job evaluation review. This project initiated last fiscal year, continuing into the current one, aims to establish a competitive salary scale aligned with the external labour market. Additionally, it seeks to develop methodologies to ensure internal processes are consistent and fair.

## Vacation Entitlement

Implemented a significant adjustment to our employee vacation policy by front loading annual vacation time at the beginning the fiscal year or on the date of hire, rather than accruing it on a bi-weekly basis. In addition, we increased new hire entitlement from 3 weeks to 4 weeks.



This past year Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services continued to experience rapid growth. As of March 31, 2024 we had 135 employees. This past year HR supported the recruitment, onboarding, and movement of **54 new hires** and **21 internal transfers**. Position changes included 8 new positions, 14 updated positions and 6 archived positions. We leveraged multiple recruitment channels, including our website, internal postings, online job boards, social media, and job fairs.



We successfully transitioned several key responsibilities to the Human Resources Department that included oversight of the Cultural Coordinator position, occupational health and safety program and the administration of employee health and dental benefits.

## Cultural Coordinator

Offered various activities to all employees including:

- Traditional birch bark making
- Rock your mocks
- Orange shirt beading workshop
- Ribbon skirt/shirt making
- Cultural staff meetings
- Monthly beading circle
- Medicine gathering
- Strawberry Jam Making
- Cultural orientation
- Moss bags and dream catchers
- Wild Ricing
- NOSM students
- Traditional Parenting Workshop



## Occupational Health & Safety

Workplace safety inspections, code drills, and employee training opportunities continued during the transition of the occupational health and safety program. Our corporate committee meets bi-monthly and works hard to ensure our organization continues to remain compliant with legislated safety standards.

## Workplace Wellness Committee

Our employees work hard to care for our clients and it is important to ensure they are taking care of themselves too. Our Workplace Wellness Committee organized a number of wellness activities including monthly wellness challenges/initiatives, corporate golf memberships, staff wellness day and Christmas party.

# Behavioural Health Services

*Nakita Morrisseau, Director of Behavioural Health Services*



I am honoured to share with all of you the many great accomplishments and activities Behavioural Health Services completed over the 2023-2024 fiscal year. None of which would have been possible without the unwavering support from our Anishinaabeg Community Leadership, Partners, Board of Directors, our dedicated and valued employees.

Behavioural Health Services participated in a temporary structural change during the tenure of this last fiscal year with the development of Wiidookodaadiwin. Under this new department housed the Social Emergencies program, and the Director of Wiidookodaadiwin. This work began late in the previous fiscal year, with the overall goal to increase capacity for the Director to work towards covering all financial shortfalls of capital and operational budgets for the Wiidookodaadiwin women shelter. As the objective of this re-structure was completed during this fiscal year, the two departments were amalgamated under one department with oversight resuming with the Director of Behavioural Health Services.



A new structure was proposed that put required resources in place for teams to have adequate support and resources, while the streamlined and coordinated support of one senior manager providing oversight. Cost savings with the new structure allowed operating budgets to support new positions that would bridge identified gaps in services such as, an additional Community Addictions RPN, Clinical Case Manager and an Addiction Treatment Coordinator.

The landscape of mental health and addictions in Southern Treaty Three continues to demonstrate the need to enhanced and coordinated services. Improvements continue to be made within available financial and human resources. It is a true testament to the compassionate team members we have working for the Anishinaabeg communities that I share the following report.



## Mental Health Services

The Mental Health program continued to experience a waitlist over the course of the year with anticipated 4-6 weeks for counselling initiation. Waitlist triaging systems were developed last fiscal year and have not alleviated wait times as anticipated. It was identified, through consideration of client need, activities identified in service delivery, and through feedback, that case management services were needed. Over the next fiscal year a new client flow will be initiated that includes case management services to ensure that all client needs are identified and supported to improve overall wellness from a wholistic approach.



## Cultural Community Support

Cultural and Community Support healing programs continue to be one of our most well attending programming. Bi-weekly sweat lodge ceremonies and men's drumming nights have been long standing programs that demonstrate Anishinaabeg healing practices are a first line support for wellness.



**1,565**  
direct contacts

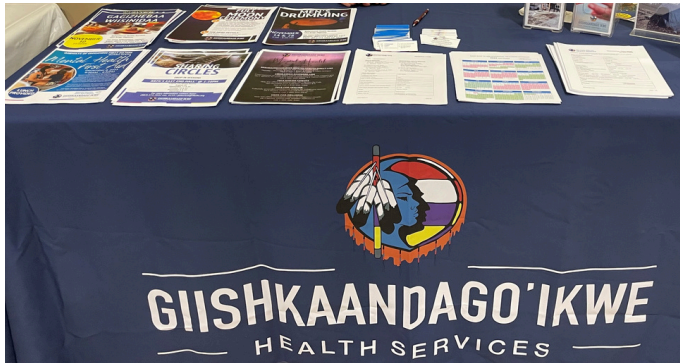
**1,026**  
non-unique attendees at  
scheduled programs

Programming	# of Programs Offered	Attendance
Sweat Lodge Ceremony	24	547
Men's Drumming	26	409
Sweat Lodge Rebuilds	3	45
Teaching Lodge Rebuilds	2	25

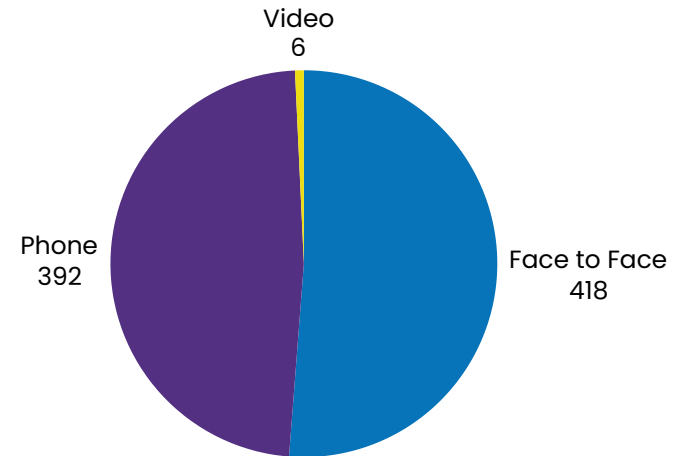


# Counselling Services

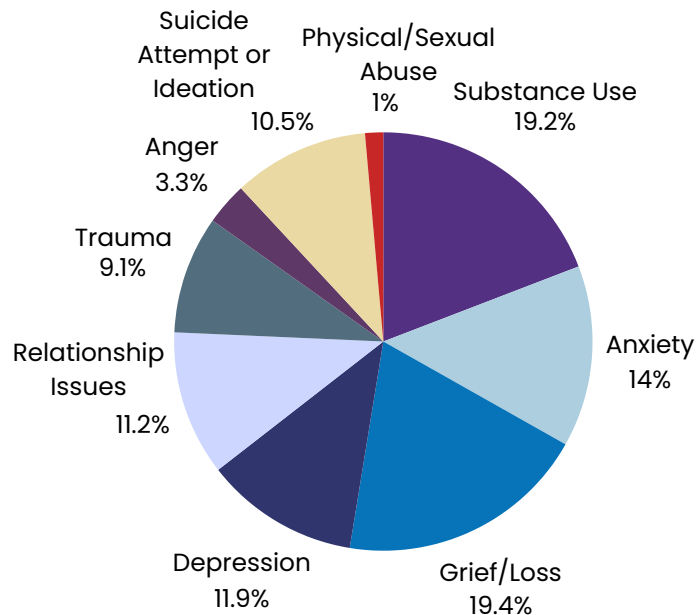
The Mental Health Services team collectively provided **1,052** direct counselling contacts to **240** clients



Method of Contact



Primary Presenting Concern



This year, mental health services has seen a decrease of addiction as presenting concern by 17.3%, suicidal ideation, or attempt increase by 6%, grief increase by 6%. Concerns related to addictions and grief are the two leading concerns at 19%, compared to addictions as the sole leading presenting concern from last fiscal year. Under the Social Emergencies program we have seen an increase in social community crisis response request for situations related to grief and loss, and anticipate this trend will continue for presenting issues into the next fiscal year.

As a response to trends seen in mental health for the communities in Southern Treaty Three, mental health services coordinated a number of activities to support front line community wellness employees. Some training and wellness activities include Cognitive Behavioural Therapy skills, Suicide Intervention Skills, cedar bath ceremonies and self-care for workers.

\*The statistics should be carefully considered as we know opioid use and poisoning rates in the region are increasing.

## Social Emergencies

The need to improve, streamline and enhance our capacity to response to community social emergency and crisis response was prioritize this last year. Social emergencies initiated process improvements with additional capacity from the removal of social emergency coordinator responsible from the manager position to a dedicated Social Emergency Coordinator. A standardized request form to ensure consistent and comprehensive communication during crisis was developed, tested and implemented. Over the year, 86 social community crisis requests were responded to in the Social Emergencies program.

A number of community based social emergency training opportunities were delivered for a total of 117 community members trained. Trainings delivered ranged from First Aid CPR, mental health first aid, emergency first responder training ect. In addition to training, various emergency response items and resources were identified through needs and engagement, and were supported by the organization.

<b>6</b>	Community sharing circle
<b>480</b>	Addiction Awareness Summit
<b>44</b>	Emergency First Responder Training
<b>34</b>	Mental Health First Aid
<b>17</b>	Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
<b>8</b>	Canadian Red Cross Standard First Aid/CPR/AED
<b>122</b>	Outreach Lunch
<b>2</b>	Be Safe Lifeguard App
<b>12</b>	Fire Arm Safety



\*Activities Held and Attendance

### Prevention Materials & Supplies

Food Hampers	2,000
Community AED Replacements	10
Naloxone Kits	20
Headlamps	100
Sandbags	1,000
Puncture Resistant Gloves	30
First Aid Kits	290
Eyewash Stations	10
GPS Devices	4
Fire Blankets	96
Fire Extinguishers	50
Air Purifiers	40
Wilderness First Aid Kits	30
Fire/CO Detectors	30
Marine Safety Kits	100
LED Reflective Vests	110
Foil Blankets	1,000
CPR Pocket Masks	200
Vehicle Roadside Safety Kits	100

## Mental Wellness

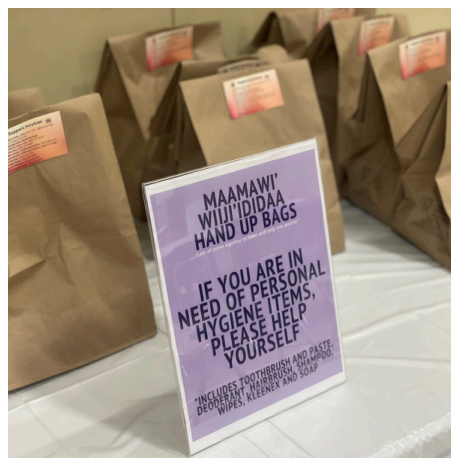
Mental Wellness supported **311 Mental Health Direct Line contacts** over the year for the same day urgent wellness support service. The Mental Wellness team were key participants in **86 social community responses** through direct crisis response. They have also provided various crisis prevention activities for a total of **1,316 participants** over the year.

### Suicide and Crisis Prevention Activities Summary

Wellness Activity	# of Participants
Sharing Circle	13
Youth Wellness Workshop/Education Session	31
Fort Frances High School Programming	130
Wellness Activity	280
Ribbon Skirt Making	9
Golf for Wellness	100
Community Fish Fry	300
Teen Nights	9
Post Crisis Debrief	29
Nishmas	353
Community Halloween Activity	62

### Additional Highlights:

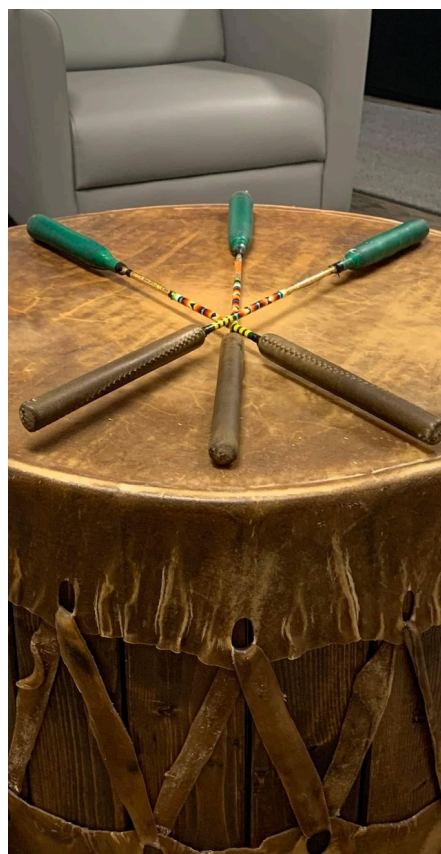
- Fort Frances High School Lunch and Learns on a bi-weekly basis during lunch breaks to discuss health relationships, wellness, grief etc.
- Community-based self-care haircuts and manicures delivered in all 10 Anishinaabeg communities for those who experience travel, financial and health related barriers to self-care activities.
- Fall Harvest collaboration with Fort Frances High School for Grade 7&8 students with approximately 150





## Land-based Program

The Land-based Counsellors have provided **1,175 client contacts** over the last year with **922 non-unique participants**. Seasonal land-based programs were delivered from bear grease rendering, canoeing, wild rice processing and maple syrup processing. The program purchased a number of smokers for each of the communities to increase capacity for traditional food activities and increase food sovereignty with Indigenous foods.



Programming	# of Program Offered	Attendance
Youth Drum Group	3	3
Gagizhebaa Wiisinidaa Breakfast Program	5	136
Senior Valentine's Day Breakfast	1	55
Outreach Lunch	2	100
Youth Sweat Lodge Ceremony	2	31
Traditional Grief	1	18
Women's Hand Drumming	16	133
Full Moon Ceremony	8	55
Sit with an Elder	3	11
Sharing with our Youth	3	21
Cedar Bath Ceremony	4	49
Drum Social	1	120
Wild Ricing	3	60
Bear Grease Rendering	1	10
Painting Workshop	1	7
Maple Syrup Processing	1	6
Canoeing	1	32
Smoked Tea Gathering	1	20
Land-based Wellness Walks	4	28

## Mememgwaawag Anti-Human Trafficking

The Mememgwaawag Human Trafficking program provided **422 client contacts** over the year. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the program was able to accomplish the development of a Human Trafficking Screener and Safety Plan to safely identify and respond to at risk and human trafficking clients. Basic need supplies were purchased and distributed to those who are at risk or are currently being trafficked. Education and awareness continues to be a priority for the program and a youth human trafficking presentation was developed which will be informative, age appropriate and include more information on social media and online safety. Another accomplishment in education and awareness efforts includes the labour trafficking presentation for service providers and mobile clinic for migrant workers organized by FCJ Refugee group.

Our hard working team organized a number of events throughout the year including a sharing circle with an Elder and Women Hand Drummers on International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women. The team also delivered an Outreach Christmas Dinner to the Family Centre, attendees received a full Christmas Dinner with signed Christmas cards.

## Mobile Crisis Response

The Mobile Crisis Response worker provided services to **80 individuals**, with **50 face to face contacts** and **65 phone supports**. We are excited to announce that there will be an increased financial contribution for next fiscal for the hiring of two permanent full time Mobile Crisis Response Workers who will work 12 hour shifts (4 days on and 4 days off).

Activity	# of Participants
Outreach Supports	42
Human Trafficking Education Sessions	69
Lunch and Learn Service Provider Education	15
World Human Trafficking Day BBQ	80
Labour Trafficking Training	17
Awareness Event	121
Youth Education Sessions	27
You are Not Alone Program	5





## Wiidookodaadiwin

The Wiidookodaadiwin program received full financial requirements for the capital and operational budgets of the Wiidookodaadiwin women shelter. Capital funding was received through Indigenous Services Canada and Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. All pre-agreement requirements for execution of the funding agreement have been met, and the agreement has been executed this fiscal. Operational budgets have been supported through Indigenous Services Canada, Family Violence Prevention Program and Jordan's principal. The women shelter has adequate funding for a full complement of staff, including enhanced services. Services will include child and youth workers, family court navigators, cultural support, and care coordinators. Construction of the facility is scheduled to begin summer 2024 with an anticipated 52 weeks to completion timeline.



## Mino Ayaa Ta Win Healing Centre

### Bed Based Addiction Treatment

Our Bed Based Addiction Treatment program provided service to **58 clients** with **4,201 contacts**.

**We had 33 individuals complete and graduate from the program.**

Other departures included 10 self discharge, 2 discharge to hospital, and 5 involuntary discharge.

Other highlights include an increase in financial support and work completed to improve parking space, develop a paved recreation space to support sports, and trail access to the lake, which will improve client experience and develop healthy, recovery orientated activities.



Activity	# of Participants
New Year Community Drum Social	36
New Year Community Sweat Lodge	17
Traditional Grief Workshop	8

### Withdrawal Management & Community Addiction Services

Withdrawal Management provided **18,210 client contacts** with **125 individuals** receiving services.

Community Addiction Services provided **2,737 contacts** with **314 individuals receiving services**. The Community Addiction Services team continues to provide education about the Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) program.



Miigwech



## Client Success Stories

*Junice Johnson, Maakadaagabo - Nigigoonsiminikaaning*

"Even in the darkness, Behavioural Health Services can help you find your internal light, the fire within you. Once you invest in yourself, your fire will become brighter and stronger and that fire will bring you back to life."



*Janice Henderson - Mitaanjigamiing*



"I was recently asked to provide a testimonial about my experience with Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services. I readily agreed to share my thoughts. First of all, I need to state that throughout my life I have been relatively healthy. I have been a diabetic for 25 years and have been able to manage this with medication and exercise. I rarely had to obtain services from this health organization until my health changed.

I was diagnosed in May 2022 with cancer and have since undergone a 5-day radiation treatment, chemotherapy and 2 surgeries. The care before, during and post treatments I received from the Home and Community Care Team was exceptional. This was important as it was a challenge to find ways to ensure my emotional, spiritual, physical and mental well being was intact. When you have cancer, you can easily be overwhelmed with all the changes and understand all the changes to your body. The staff were very encouraging, patient caring and knowledgeable.

I would also like to acknowledge Katie Bissonnette, who was formerly our Case Manager for Mitaanjigamiing. Throughout my recovery, she made herself available to receive texts and phone calls during, after regular work hours and on weekends. I would also receive check in calls periodically from her throughout my cancer journey. I truly appreciated all the kindness, emotional care, respect, encouragement provided from her and her team. Hilary Tuesday, an Anishinaabe woman from Big Grass is now our Case Manager. She has continued providing the same caring, respect and commitment to the clients of our community.

In closing, I say miigwech to Kayla Caul-Chartier, Executive Director of Giishkaandago'lkwe, who has been there for many years and has led this organization. I am proud of our organization and encourage everyone to utilize their services."

# Health Services

*Deirdre O'Sullivan-Drombolis, Director of Health Services*

*Boozhoo,*

This fiscal year saw our Health Services team continue to navigate supporting the unmet health care needs that evolved out of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the lasting affects and impacts that this time had on the communities we serve. Integrated into this was the establishment of our new strategic plan which provided direction to our team not only on the health services needed by the communities but also the manner in which those service need to be provided. Clear guidance has been shared to prioritize increased holistic services and strong focus on relationship all founded on the Anishinaabe culture and ways of being. As such Health Services has continued to grow, develop and apply creative solutions to ensure the provision of exemplary care that is first and foremost built on relationship amidst the challenges they face. I am honoured to celebrate with you the remarkable accomplishments of this dedicated team in 2023-2024.



*"We are all one drum.  
And we need each other."  
- Richard Wagamese*

Over this past fiscal year the organization laid the foundational to work to achieve the vision outlined in our strategic plan and part of that was the trial departmental structure of separating Health Services and Maternal Child Health. This trial resulted in careful further restructuring of the departments this new fiscal year, however this Health Services report focuses on the services provided and highlights of the Public Health and Home and Community Care programs.

**20,631**

**Total Encounters**

**1,612**

**Total Clients Served**

**4,787**

**Home Visits**

**4,593**

**Other Community Visits**

**1,582**

**Phone/Virtual Visits**



## Public Health

### Community Health

The Community Health team continues its focus on the pillars of public health, including ongoing immunization catch up as well regularly scheduled immunizations, support navigating sexual health concerns and other communicable diseases, prenatal and well baby visits, providing community linkages for the prenatal nutrition program, and harm reduction initiatives including needle exchange support and naloxone kit distribution. Knowledge sharing and support of individuals as well as the community as a whole is integral to all disease prevention. With these goals in mind the Community Health team completed:



**1,197** community members received **4,691** service encounters through the Community Health program

One of the main successes over this past fiscal year has been to ensure access to HIV point of care testing within community as well as enabling access to blood work for other blood borne infectious diseases. Looking forward to the New Year, the Community Health team strives to ensure readiness for health system challenges that have been flagged as important at a regional level including increasing access to cancer screening, ongoing communicable disease prevention, and harm reduction supports as well as increasing cross department collaboration with mental health, addictions and maternal child health programs.

710	Community Visits
20	In-community Immunization Clinics
1278	Immunizations against Vaccine Preventable Diseases Given
132	Prenatal/Postpartum Visits
22	Sexual Health Services Client Encounters
83	Communicable Disease Follow-Ups
38	School Visits
200	Intranasal Naloxone Kits Dispensed
35	In-community Education Sessions (with 210 attendees!)

## Environmental Public Health

Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services celebrated the return of our Environmental Public Officer of Health to providing local and full capacity services this year. This program continues to ground their work in the pillars of Environmental Health including communicable disease control, safe drinking water, healthy housing, water and waste management, food safety, and emergency preparedness. With these goals at the forefront the Environmental Health team has completed:

196	Community Visits
22	Team Project Meetings
99	Community Services Requests
33	Inspections
249	Consultations
4	Septic System Applications
348	Food and Health Product Recall Notifications Issued
7	Air Quality Alerts Issued
24	Animal Bite Investigations
1	Blastomycosis Case Investigation
3	Food Safety Trainings
1,100	Water Samples Sent for Testing (Bacteriological, Chemistry, Lead, etc.)
21	Boil Water Advisories Issued
19	Boil Water Advisories Lifted

Moving forward into the New Year, the Public Health team as a whole will be working towards expanding collaborative services and knowledge sharing, with a special focus on targeting community requests including topics like Blastomycosis and cancer prevention.





## Home and Community Care

Holistic and evidence based best practices in wound care and prevention continue to be a need that the Home and Community Care team prioritizes with the recognition that the number of lower limb wounds and amputations within the First Nation's people of North Western Ontario is significantly higher than the rest of Canada. Our team has been recognized as a leader in this area and is an integral partner in the North Western Ontario Lower Limb Preservation Strategy. Through this work the first North Western Ontario Limb Preservation Conference was held in June of this past year. The conference was a huge success, supporting advancing limb preservation knowledge across the region and increased awareness and advocacy for services close to home. In addition this strategy enabled the provision of proper footwear for clients in need across Southern Treaty 3 and this program is supported by our Foot Care team.

A big component of our wound care program involves our quality improvement initiative and ongoing partnership with SWIFT medical. This technology enables streamlined and accurate charting of wounds to enhance communication to care team members both within and external to our organization. We have noted impressive increases in efficiencies within our teams as well as improved healing rates through our implementation process. Over the past year we have been able to expand our partnership with SWIFT medical and are currently a key component of their implementation project of new features and client facing applications. We are hopeful for even more positive results through this new implementation.

The need for improved palliative and end of life care has been flagged at multiple levels, right from individuals, to communities, to the territory level. Our team received further dollars to implement a Palliative Care Clinical Coach with the goals of increasing capacity both within communities and across health care providers in the provision of culturally safe and client centered palliation. Our team will be working closely together to expand and further implement this vision and an overall improved palliative care and end of life services for clients and their care givers.



## Home and Community Care (continued)

We are excited to share that after significant advocacy the Respite dollars initially received from Ontario Health as one time funding is now base funding. Due to this we have been able to hire employees to fully support this program and are working to expand these services. These services will be able to support to families caring for loved ones who require 24 hour support with the goal of relieving care-giver burn out, reducing visits to the emergency department, and support individuals to stay in their home communities longer.

A significant amount of work has been done over this past year analyzing program level roles and processes to optimized efficiencies to enable our front line employees to spend more time face to face with clients and in community. This has included the re-initiation of quarterly meetings with each community's Health Team to keep a pulse on the quality of services provided. The feedback received has been incorporated into program planning and will be prioritized to continue moving forward.

**577** community members received over **10, 662** service encounters through the Home Care Program

Service Area Highlights	Community Members Served	Service Encounters
Nursing Treatments and Procedures	470	4346
End of Life/Palliative Care	28	408
Respite Care	11	43
Home Making Assessments/Follow Up	85	290
Wound Assessments	131	1,930
Healed Wounds		181





## Foot Care and Diabetes Education

Our Diabetes Educator continues to provide one on one diabetes education and intervention, supporting 203 clients in self managing their diabetes. Through 12 clinics focusing on prevention, 120 people had their blood sugar and blood pressure screened. 240 healthy food boxes were distributed.

Over the course this fiscal year our Foot Care team continued to be the one of the few providing consistent foot care services throughout the district. Our team also is able to provide more advanced foot care interventions than most services. This small but mighty team continues to prioritize client care in this very high need area. Through their careful clinical work and risk assessment strategies their focus is on diabetic foot complication prevention, and once an issue such as a wound is identified work in collaboration with the Home and Community Care team.

The team is very active with Grand Council Treaty 3's Diabetes Strategy, with current focuses being on increased knowledge at the community level.



**653 community members** received **3381 service encounters** from the Diabetes Education and Foot Care Team.

Foot Care Services	<b>1,593</b>
Debridement	<b>380</b>
Pairs of Shoes Provided	<b>8</b>

This has been a year of growth and change for the Health Services team and they have demonstrated ongoing determined commitment to providing quality care grounded in the grandfather and grandmother teachings of the Anishinaabe people we serve. All programs have heard the call to focus on building relationships, and to come together to provide services in a more integrated way and have and will continue to prioritize this work. We are so grateful and honoured to be able to see clients in their communities and support them on their mino ayawin journeys.

# Maternal Child Health

*Ashlee Grimard, Director of Maternal Child Health*

*Boozhoo,*

2023-2024 saw growth and development of Maternal Child Health services and supports. It also marked the final phase of the trial restructuring of Health Services that set out to develop a viable Maternal Child Health Department at Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services. I am pleased to report that we have successfully achieved the required goals to implement a sustainable change to our organizational structure during this fiscal year. The Maternal Child Health department will become permanent effective April 1, 2024 under the new umbrella of Children's Services and Public Health. As we reflect back on all of our work this year, we celebrate the ongoing accomplishments of our remarkable team members as we continue to strive toward Mino Ayaa Win.

Maternal Child Health Services strives to realize coordinated delivery of quality and equitable supports for children and families from preconception to parenting and child development that are rooted in Anishinaabe culture.





# Children’s Oral Health Initiative



Due to a temporary reduction in Registered Dental Hygienist capacity, the 2023-2024 fiscal year focused on maintaining adequate service delivery as program quality improvement priorities were briefly paused for the Children’s Oral Health Initiative (COHI). Despite the reduced staffing, the Dental Coordinator successfully delivered dental screening and fluoride varnish applications only slightly below the 2022-2023 numbers as the focus remained on community-based accessible and quality oral health care.

COHI also administered Jordan’s Principle “Equitable Access to Oral Health Care” group funding through which 17 children accessed necessary dental treatment such as emergency exams, restorative dental treatment, and dental surgeries within the hospital setting this year. The COHI team continues to advocate for unmet oral health needs. The funding will continue into the 2024-2025 fiscal year, ensuring that children with unmet oral health needs that do not have their status cards are able to access oral health services as needed.

With a full Registered Dental Hygienist staffing complement, the team is eagerly working toward planning for 2024-2025 focusing on innovative health promotion, cross-collaboration and quality improvement priorities.



265	Dental Screenings
400	Fluoride Varnish Applications
80	Temporary Fillings
58	Dental Sealants
24	Silver Diamine Fluoride Applications
133	Dental Referrals
100	Consultations with Dental Provider
79	Consultations with Family Member/Guardian



## Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program

The delivery of the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program continued to focus on the provision of nutrition vouchers and milk coupons to support developmental and nutritional outcomes for pregnant women and children under the age of two years old. To support increasing food security needs in Southern Treaty Three, the program also provided increased nutrition voucher benefits in December 2023 and March 2024 to respond to decreasing access to affordable nutrition and food security challenges.

In 2023–2024, the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program distributed **2,030 nutrition vouchers** and **6,432 milk coupons** to pregnant or parent/caregivers of children under two residing in one of the ten Southern Treaty Three communities.

## Indigenous Midwifery

***A model of care rooted in Anishinaabe approaches to family, ceremony, traditional knowledge and connecting to land as a part of birth.***

2023–2024 was the initial year of service delivery for Indigenous Midwifery at Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services as we implemented contracted services in August of 2023. The Anishinaabe Elder Midwife supported three births and provided several families with ongoing pre and post-natal support to meet their spiritual, physical, mental and emotional need. Several community group education sessions were also held to support the awareness and understanding of traditional midwifery as well as traditional parenting.

In March 2023, a session to understand the teachings and prepare traditional moss bags and belly button pouch – Odis – was completed. 28 odis pouches, 20 dream catchers, and 24 moss bags were prepared that will support families welcoming new babies.

With the permanency of the Maternal Child Health Department and the implementation of the Manager of Maternal Child Health, focused program development and increased community-based services will be at the forefront of planning for 2024–2025.

During the 2023–2024 service year, the Anishinaabe Elder Midwife completed **118 encounters** with **9 clients** and held **11 group education sessions and series**.



## Child's First Initiative

The Child's First Initiative (CFI) team of Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services provided supports and services not otherwise available to 501 children and their families in the 10 Anishinaabeg communities in Southern Treaty Three in 2023-2024. Services included in-person assessment and interventions, education to children, families and communities, advocacy and support, and funding applications to Jordan's Principle for additional identified unmet needs.

Over this past service year, the CFI program saw a substantial increase in referrals for service. We continue to see referrals directed for funding supports for food security and sustainable housing and increased referrals for mental health therapy, self and emotional regulation, child development requests and behavioural supports. The majority of referrals for these supports are received from parents, caregivers, and schools. While services continue to be in-person and provided at home, school, early learning or community-based locations based on client preference, a priority for this year was increasing team-based presence in communities.

A commitment to continuous quality improvement saw the implementation of an Enhanced referral checklist and a Service Planning Data Base to facilitate improved service plans to meet client-led service goals in 2023-2024. We procured and renovated a new service location to accommodate our growing program and better meet service needs and also initiated the transfer to a new Electronic Medical Record (EMR). The new EMR will become operational in 2024-2025 and will provide an improved documentation platform as well as statistical data for tracking and analysis that will enhance data-based program and service enhancement planning.

### Additional Targeted Services

Additional targeted services to support children and families beyond direct individualized client services, included:

- Community based groups for youth focusing on nutrition, meal planning and preparation, daily living skills, and well being
- Play groups for preschool children and parents focusing on general development, school readiness, parent/child attachment
- After school community based activities for children and youth

## Child's First Initiative (continued)

The Child's First Initiative Program also continues to administer Service Access Resolution Funding that supports children and families with approved Jordan's Principle individual applications for goods and services. In 2023-2024, we administered \$1,120,134 in direct payments to eliminate barriers and improve timely access to goods and services required to meet unmet needs of children in Southern Treaty Three.



Service	Children Supported	Encounters
Behaviour Support	47	677
Children's Mental Health and Psychotherapy	144	855
Family Navigation and Case Management	264	2,088
Infant Child Development Family Navigation and Case Management	240	1,401
Occupational Therapy	135	2,129
Physiotherapy	27	305
Registered Dietician (RD)	50	419
Speech and Language	86	1,171



Looking onward to 2024-2025, we remain invested in the success and continued enhancement of Maternal Child Health Services at Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services. The implementation of the Manager of Maternal Child Health and permanency of the department will be key in the ongoing growth and development of services that are Anishinaabe led and community driven. The new umbrella of Children's Services and Public Health will also see the alignment of services that have similar functional goals and objectives that will create the foundation for further program development that is coordinated, collaborative and better situated to meet community needs.

The success of our service delivery is always dependent on human resources. The dedicated employees that made up the Maternal Child Health Service complement in 2023-2024 have continued to demonstrate their commitment and passion for improving and enhancing quality services to meet the needs of the communities we serve. To them we are indebted. We look forward to the work to come as we move forward with the Grandmother and Grandfather Teachings of the Anishinaabeg and our vision of Mino Ayaawin to guide us.







