PATHWAYS
EXECUTIVE SEARCH



Director, Indigenous & Northern Health

Healthcare Excellence Canada

Excellence en santé Canada



The Organization

Healthcare Excellence Canada (HEC) is working toward a future where everyone in Canada has access to safe, high-quality care, no matter who they are or where they live. HEC works alongside the people closest to care, bringing together patients and caregivers; First Nations, Inuit, and Métis partners; the health workforce; and others across the country to turn knowledge and experience into meaningful improvement.

Practical and action-oriented, HEC helps good ideas travel further and faster, so more people benefit. It connects people and organizations to spread and scale what works, strengthen capacity and collective leadership, and shape policy and practice for safer, higher-quality care. An independent, not-for-profit charity funded primarily by Health Canada, HEC was launched in 2021, bringing together the Canadian Patient Safety Institute and the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement.

Values

HEC's work and organizational culture are guided by four values:

- Partner meaningfully
- Innovate courageously
- Act with integrity
- Be inclusive

The Organization continued

Looking Ahead: HEC's 2026–2031 Strategy

HEC's 2026–2031 strategy builds on five years of work and 18 months of engagement with more than 1,200 people and organizations across Canada. It focuses HEC's efforts in two areas: transforming safety, quality and value across the health sector; and expanding access to safe, connected, high-quality care closer to home and community.

Across this work, HEC is committed to integrating patient, caregiver, and community perspectives; the perspectives of people working in healthcare; First Nations, Inuit, and Métis priorities; cultural safety and equity; and the appropriate use of technology.
Read the 2026–31 strategy **here**.

Indigenous Health, Cultural Safety, and Reconciliation

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis priorities are embedded in HEC's approach to healthcare excellence, including its commitment to cultural safety and equity, and to addressing racism and power imbalances within healthcare.

HEC's approach is grounded in relationships and learning. Ka-odàkedjig, meaning "those who are steering the canoe for safe passage" in Algonquin, is a collective of Elders, an Algonquin Knowledge Carrier, and a Truth and Reconciliation Coach who provide guidance to HEC staff, senior leadership, and the Board. Their guidance helps HEC ensure its work is informed by the perspectives and lived experiences of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

HEC's Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan provides a roadmap for advancing this work across the organization and within health systems. The plan – currently being refreshed – addresses racism, cultural safety and humility, organizational capacity, and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis priorities.

Read the Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan Annual Report 2024-2025 **here**, and meet Ka-odàkedjig **here**.

The Opportunity

The **Director, Indigenous and Northern Health** will provide leadership for the strategic direction and development of HEC's Indigenous and Northern Health portfolio. The Director will lead work to help improve health and quality of care for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and northern communities; advance HEC's commitments to truth and reconciliation and to cultural safety and humility; and develop and sustain meaningful relationships with partners across Canada. Reporting to the Vice-President, Health System Improvement & Chief Strategy Officer, the Director leads the Indigenous and Northern Health team and is a member of HEC's Management Committee.

Duties & Responsibilities

Relationships, Partnerships, and System Impact

- Develops, nurtures, and maintains meaningful relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis partners to co-design and co-deliver distinctions-based health system improvements that enable cultural safety and humility in health systems.
- Works closely with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis governments and organizations; regional health authorities; and the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to build and strengthen capacity to assess, co-design, implement, evaluate, spread lessons learned, and share wise practices and innovations. Areas may include, but are not limited to, cultural safety and humility, primary healthcare, chronic disease prevention and management, mental health and wellness, care for older adults and caregivers and care across jurisdictions.
- Identifies First Nations, Inuit, and Métis faculty, mentors, and coaches for HEC programming.
- Develops and implements – working closely with the HEC Communications team and partners – effective communications strategies with partners and peers in the delivery of Indigenous and Northern Health programming.

Duties & Responsibilities continued

Strategic Leadership and Organizational Impact

- Leads, develops, implements, and oversees activities and initiatives that contribute to HEC's organizational purpose and strategy with a focus on Indigenous and Northern Health.
- Advances and continues to evolve HEC's action plan for truth and reconciliation, including ongoing strategies to build HEC staff cultural competency and capacity to meaningfully engage with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and develop and implement supporting policies, processes, and structures.
- Serves as an advisor to other HEC programs regarding embedding cultural safety and humility and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis perspectives and priorities into the design and delivery of programs, curricula, or content as required.
- Conducts and oversees environmental scanning activities and appropriate engagement to identify First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and northern emerging issues, which support and enhance program design, delivery, and analysis opportunities.
- Participates as a member of the extended leadership team, and works closely with other extended leadership team members, senior advisors, internal and external partners, and quality improvement, patient safety, and measurement experts to identify opportunities for alignment and collaboration in the development and delivery of programs.
- Provides their Vice-President with strategic advice and a comprehensive understanding and reporting of operational issues related to the activities and initiatives in the portfolio, including opportunities for future activities/programming in alignment with HEC's strategy.
- Supports the Vice-President, Health System Improvement & Chief Strategy Officer, and other senior staff in preparation for meetings and other public events as required.

Duties & Responsibilities continued

Program Leadership and Impact

- Generates, leads, and/or reviews the development of curriculum, new content, and products for workshops, webinars, and other learning opportunities/resources, in collaboration with partners and staff.
- Oversees internal continuous quality improvement (CQI) and works with independent evaluators to assess the impact and effectiveness of programming and develop initiatives to increase program impact.
- Ensures program and partnership development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination abide by OCAP, OCAS, Inuit Research Principles, and other relevant First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis data governance principles.
- Has overall accountability for the program delivery of various Northern and Indigenous partnerships and initiatives, including project management, operational planning, financial monitoring (accountability for budgeting and forecasting), and continuous quality improvement.

People and Operational Leadership

- Provides day-to-day leadership and supervision of staff, including overseeing the work and their performance, providing coaching/mentoring, monitoring progress, and providing advice. Nurtures the environment for, and enables, a high-performing team.
- Fosters a culture of innovation, inclusion, respect, and impact with better care for everyone.
- Liaises with the Vice-President, Operations & Impact, and the Finance team regarding the development and implementation of MOUs; faculty, coaching, and external contracts; and overall financial administration.
- Manages and maintains the budget, including financial monitoring, forecasting, and budget preparation.
- Engages and manages external contractors and/or consultants as required.
- Periodically acts as back-up to Senior Program Leads in the Indigenous & Northern Health portfolio, directors in the Health System Improvement portfolio, and the Vice-President, Health System Improvement & Chief Strategy Officer.
- Performs other duties, as assigned.

Compensation

The salary range for this position is $128,000 to $160,000 (typical hiring range). HEC offers a comprehensive benefits package, including a defined benefit pension plan through CAAT, employer-paid group health benefits, an Employee and Family Assistance Program, a fitness and wellness allowance, and a 95% parental leave top-up. Employees also benefit from flexible hours and remote work options, professional development support, and compressed summer hours.

Management/Supervisory and Advisory Responsibility:

- **Direct Supervision:** Up to 10 direct/ indirect reports.
- **Provides functional advice:** Play a leadership role in the design and delivery of HEC's Indigenous and Northern Health work. Work collaboratively with other directors to identify synergies among HEC's activities and initiatives. Provide advice/recommendations and action plans to the Vice-President, Health System Improvement & Chief Strategy Officer that will maximize the effectiveness and impact of HEC's programming. Provide advice to other directors to ensure alignment of activities and initiatives across HEC's programming.

Contacts:

- **Internal:** Establishes and maintains effective relationships with all employees at all levels.
- **External:** Establishes and maintains significant contact with partners, affiliated organizations, and other not-for-profit organizations. Develops and maintains relationships with healthcare improvement experts and new partners to increase awareness of HEC's improvement initiatives. Represents HEC on relevant national, international, and regional committees, working groups, etc. and identifies opportunities for future work in this area. Understands the political, financial, and organizational sensitivities related to HEC's partners.

Effort and Working Conditions:

- **Effort:** Regularly required to manage several tasks simultaneously over an extended period, and juggle multiple competing priorities with occasional urgent situations. Extensive visual concentration due to computer work. Mental fatigue resulting from focusing and intense concentration.
- **Working conditions:** May be required to engage in local or overnight travel. Is required to occasionally extend hours of work to meet work demands and occasionally expected to work evenings and weekends during peak periods. Frequently interrupted and may have to work on urgent issues.

The Candidate

The ideal candidate is a collaborative and relationship-centred leader who is energized by the opportunity to advance meaningful change in Indigenous health, cultural safety, and reconciliation across Canada. They understand that lasting impact is built through trust, humility, and genuine partnership, and bring the credibility to engage effectively with Indigenous communities, Elders, health system leaders, governments, and partners. Equally strategic and hands-on, they will be excited by the opportunity to help shape HEC's evolving reconciliation journey, influence healthcare systems at a national level and across the country, and contribute to closing persistent gaps in health outcomes and experiences for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.

Skills and Competencies

- Inclusive leadership style and highly developed people management skills.
- Strong emotional intelligence and self-awareness, with the ability to navigate difficult conversations about cultural safety and racism constructively and to hold space between differing perspectives.
- Humility and possessing a collaborative, facilitative style that leads through influence rather than authority.
- Comfortable working alongside Elders and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis partners, respecting diversity and differing viewpoints.
- Ability to foster strong internal and external relationships.
- Experience being part of a small, dynamic team where you have been doing a lot with available resources; you have vision for the future and are excited to roll up your sleeves and get in the weeds with your team.
- Highly developed interpersonal and problem-solving skills.
- Excellent project management skills, including the ability to plan and collaborate with other teams and across the organization.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Demonstrated time management skills. Well-organized and attentive to detail.
- Professional tact, diplomacy, and confidentiality required.
- Ability to work well in a dynamic and highly motivated team.

The Candidate continued

Education and Experience

- Master's degree or equivalent in Indigenous health, health sciences, health policy, health administration, public health, healthcare delivery, or a related field, or equivalent education and/or work experience.
- Minimum seven (7) years' experience at a senior level is required, including at least five (5) years in a supervisory/management role, including substantive Indigenous health, health services, and/or health policy experience, preferably in a healthcare delivery organization and/or health policy environment. Equivalent experience will be considered.
- Computer software skills with the Microsoft Office suite and virtual environment are required.
- Demonstrated leadership role in provincial and pan-Canadian large-scale quality improvement and patient-safety initiatives is preferred.
- Meaningful engagement, relationship building, and partnership development with First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis governments, and/or organizations at the community, regional, and national level, preferably in a health or social context, is required. Experience working with northern, rural, and/or remote populations is an asset.
- Demonstrated leadership and engagement skills to motivate and influence others to embrace and act on truth and reconciliation and support First Nations, Inuit, and Métis health and wellness are required.
- Knowledge and understanding of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis health and wellness context; socioeconomic determinants of health and wellness; traditional protocols; First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis community organizations and services; and policies, directions, research literature, and trends relating to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis health, wellness, cultural safety, and truth and reconciliation is required.
- Knowledge and understanding of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Owner-Control-Access-Possession (or Stewardship) (OCAP/OCAS), and other related principles, protocols, policies, and foundational documents is required.
- Experience facilitating adult learning in cultural safety/competence is required.



The Application Process

To apply, please submit a cover letter and resume in PDF format to Pathways Executive Search outlining your interest, qualifications, and experience by January 4, 2027.

Email: **Applications@PathwaysExecutiveSearch.com**, including **HEC: Director, Indigenous & Northern Health** in the subject line.

For more details or to further explore this important strategic leadership opportunity, please contact:

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Pathways Executive Search is an international executive recruitment firm, known for its ability to attract and recruit talent in culturally grounded ways. Guided by Indigenous values and principles of Indigenous inclusion, Pathways walks with those looking to broaden candidate pools, find qualified and experienced candidates, and live out their values and commitment to creating workplace cultures where people can thrive.