

*Creating a workplace where you can bring  
your whole self, knowing you are secure,  
supported, and accepted.*



# Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Reconciliation & Accessibility

## EDIRA Strategy 2026–2029



Health Equity,  
Safety & Wellness





## Acknowledging land, history and community through shared responsibility

At IWK Health, we acknowledge that we are gathered in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People, protected by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship.

We also recognize African Nova Scotians as a distinct people whose history and contributions have shaped Nova Scotia for generations.

These acknowledgements invite reflection on the lasting impacts of colonization and enslavement, and on the barriers faced by many communities, including people with disabilities, due to systemic inequities and ableism.





## A Milestone

The **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Reconciliation, and Accessibility (EDIRA) Strategy** is a milestone in our collective journey toward a more equitable and inclusive IWK Health.

This strategy is not an add-on but a foundation for how we work together, care for our communities, and grow as an organization.

As this strategy is implemented and becomes foundational, our people will play a key role in bringing this vision to life through action planning, and ongoing collaboration.

## Six Strategic Pillars

Each pillar outlines our approach to advancing EDIRA at IWK Health and provides the foundation for the strategic actions detailed in the following pages. Through a comprehensive assessment, we identified an initial set of priorities, referred to as our **First Focus**.

### *What this means for you:*

#### **For Patients and Families**

You will receive care that is more respectful, accessible, and responsive to your needs.

#### **For IWK team members**

You will work in a safer, more inclusive environment with clearer supports and expectations.

#### **For those working on EDIRA initiatives**

You will have clearer accountability towards specific actions for advancing EDIRA in your teams.

*Moving beyond symbolic gestures  
to tangible, systemic change—together.*





## PILLAR 1

# Patients & Families

Deliver equitable, accessible, culturally responsive and safe healthcare for patients and families.

Patients and families will feel seen, heard, and safe through fair, welcoming, and respectful healthcare for all cultures, identities, and backgrounds.

### Actions

- Communicate racism-free, culturally supported care to patients and families.
- Translation of materials in variety of languages. This includes signs, information sheets and other standard communication materials.
- Integrate and reflect recommendations from previous reports: *Black Live Matters Listening Sessions*, *Mi'kmaq Indigenous Health Action Plan* and the *Accessibility Action Plan*.
- Review, update, align and communicate patient navigator roles.

### First Focus

- **Language needs:** Existing tools will be assessed and promoted.



## PILLAR 2

# Systems & Structures

Embed EDIRA fully into organizational structures, partnerships, systems and policies.

Through intentional structures and bold system changes, EDIRA will be central to how we lead, partner, and make decisions.

### Actions

- Develop a policy for EDIRA initiatives for direction, coordination and consistency.
- Update current resources like the EDIRA tool kit.
- Create an evaluation framework for all priorities under the EDIRA strategy.
- Collaborate with the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, Nova Scotia Health and other health system partners on the Health Equity Framework.
- Develop an effective governance structure for EDIRA work.

### First Focus

- **Policies & practices:** We will create an overarching policy that identifies how EDIRA will show up at IWK.



### PILLAR 3

## Workforce Representation

Create a workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

We will remove barriers and create equitable opportunities so that our teams will reflect the strength, cultures, and voices of the communities we serve.

#### Actions

- Integrate equity principles into recruitment, retention, and succession processes.
- Expand orientation and integration programs for newcomer staff and healthcare professionals.
- Enhance collaboration with educational partners and students in universities and public and private colleges.

#### First Focus

- **Fair Hiring Policy:** Implementation and development of culturally supportive onboarding and ongoing programs for employees.



### PILLAR 4

## Workforce Equity & Belonging

Strengthen workplace equity and belonging for all team members.

Every team member will feel valued, respected, and supported, to show up fully, thrive and belong.

#### Actions

- Track and report on the Trusted Leader program's goal to build diverse teams.
- Develop an accountability plan for mandatory training.
- Create a resource document on Safety Information Management System (SIMS) and other EDIRA related reporting.

#### First Focus

- **Data & reporting:** Review how we gather information and how is it being used.



## PILLAR 5

# Partnerships

Establish ongoing collaboration with community groups and health system partners.

We will establish and nurture meaningful and long-lasting partnerships with community groups and health system allies to co-create solutions that reflect the voices, values, and strengths of the people we serve.

### Actions

- Develop an inventory of community groups, contacts and mandates that is centralized and updated regularly.
- Develop a plan to measure the effectiveness of engagement activities.
- Strengthen alignment with community health centres, and our provincial and jurisdictional partners.
- Partner with universities on research in relation to community engagement.

### First Focus

- **Community engagement:** Review our existing engagement plans and practices to build a consistent, coordinated, culturally-reflective approach that actively establishes and nurtures partnerships.



## PILLAR 6

# Learning, Development & Research

Immerse EDIRA in learning, development and research.

We will create a culture of curiosity and accountability through continuous education, collaborative research, and inclusive development.

### Actions

- Assess and determine Learning and Development options at time of hire.
- Embed EDIRA learning into meetings, orientation, education, etc.
- Secure a platform to track and report on training completion.

### First Focus

- **Culturally safe & specific training:** Review existing training and determine what is required to begin design.



Health Equity,  
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## How we got here

The EDIRA Strategy builds on almost 20 years of work to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion at IWK Health. This includes past initiatives, training, and important reports such as the **Black Lives Matter Listening Sessions Report** and the **Mi'kmaq Indigenous Health Action Plan** recommendations.

## With you and for you

IWK Staff and community members helped shape the IWK EDIRA strategy through committees, focus groups, and working groups. You played a vital role in building this strategy, and together, our continued collaboration is what will make it a success.

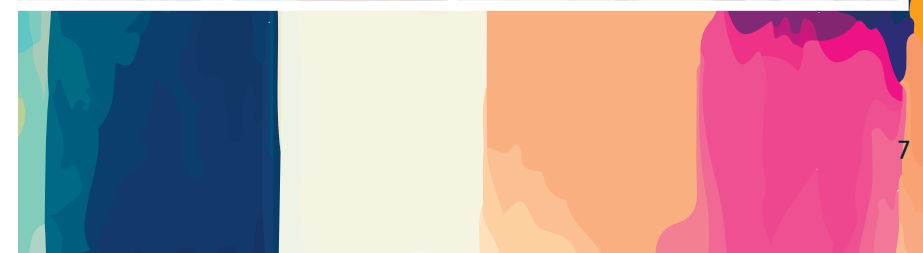
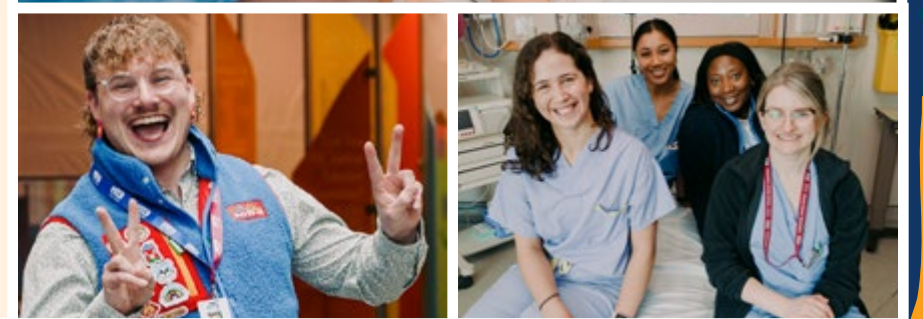


## Celebrating Progress

Twice a year, **Health Equity, Safety and Wellness** will share a progress report on the initiatives and identify new actions and priorities for the years to come!

Let's build this future together — with purpose, progress, and health equity at the core.

*Delivering healthcare that honours  
unique histories, lived experiences,  
and cultural safety.*





## Health Equity, Safety & Wellness

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For more information, visit:

[iwhealth.ca/EDIRA](https://iwhealth.ca/EDIRA)

