



INDIGENOUS HEALTH WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Author: Karen Lawford, University of Ottawa

This presentation examines the challenges of understanding Indigenous health workforce participation in Canada. The unacceptably low participation rates of Indigenous peoples in health care delivery are an indication of Canada's systemic exclusion of Indigenous peoples. Analysis of trends in Indigenous health workforce participation, which leaves us with more questions than answers, will help to shape future planning and optimize resource allocations.

CHWC 2016

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

This presentation examines the challenges of understanding Indigenous health workforce participation in Canada. The unacceptably low participation rates of Indigenous peoples in health care delivery are an indication of Canada's systemic and long term exclusion of Indigenous peoples. Analysis of trends in Indigenous health workforce participation leaves us with more questions than answers.

FINDINGS/IMPACT/OUTCOMES

The Government of Canada has invested millions of dollars to increase the health workforce participation of Indigenous peoples in Canada. A lack of evaluation criteria and the elimination of the long form census have made it difficult to assess these investments. For example, the Aboriginal Human Health Resource Initiative (AHHRI) is the only national program that was purposefully designed to increase awareness of health workforce education and employment options for Aboriginal peoples. Departmental and independent evaluations do not provide any direct evidence of the success of this program or any of the other investments in Indigenous health. Indeed, there is little data describing the outcomes of investments or where future investments could be made to positively effect on rates of Indigenous people's health workforce participation.

CONCLUSIONS

The need to understand Indigenous peoples' health workforce participation is more critical than ever. In light of the Government of Canada's commitment to "accept fully our responsibilities – and our failings – as a government, and as a country" (Trudeau, 2015 Dec 15) towards Indigenous peoples, targeted investments with measurable results must address the challenges identified in this presentation to have the greatest positive effects on the health of Indigenous people.