



**2022-2023
Annual Report**

**Healthcare
Excellence
Canada's Truth
and Reconciliation
Action Plan**



Cover artwork by

Simon Brascoupe

Anishinabeg/Haudenosaunee – Bear Clan

Simon is a member of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, Maniwaki, Quebec living in Algonquin territory in Ottawa. He has completed public art including an Algonquin Birch Bark Basket sculpture at Abinan Place based on Algonquin Elders collaborative voices. He completed large murals for the Heart Institute, Ottawa and at Ojigkwanong *Indigenous Student Centre*, Carleton University. He recently completed two large public artworks for the Pimisi Station: Mamawi – Together paddle installation painted by 100 Algonquin artists and Algonquin moose. His artistic vision is to have a significant presence in public art and institutions for Algonquin and Indigenous art and culture.

Simon's artistic vision is to communicate traditional teachings and values through the continuity of imagery and narrative. Simon's work has been exhibited in the United States, Canada, Europe, China, Japan and Cuba. He is represented in the collections at the Canadian Museum of History and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. and major corporate and private collections. He is presently in an exhibit at the National Gallery of Canada's Canadian and Indigenous Art exhibition.

Simon Brascoupe's work reflects his respect for the Algonquin Territory and land. From his perspective, animals teach humans how to see the world through their eyes and actions. For example, Simon's father taught him that the bear, when it's wounded will use the sap from a pine or cedar tree as medicine. An Algonquin teaching is that even though the bear is large it lives lightly on the land. Aboriginal People traditionally have learned by listening and learning from the animal world and nature for their profound insight and knowledge. The ability to observe is central to the artist's vision of living in harmony with nature.

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About Healthcare Excellence Canada

Healthcare Excellence Canada (HEC) works with partners to spread innovation, build capability and catalyze policy change so that everyone in Canada has safe and high-quality healthcare. Through collaboration with patients, essential care partners and people working in healthcare, we turn proven innovations into lasting improvements in all dimensions of healthcare excellence. Launched in 2021, HEC brings together the Canadian Patient Safety Institute and Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada.

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Healthcare Excellence Canada (HEC) honours the traditional territories upon which our staff and partners live, work and play. We recognize that the standard of living that we enjoy today is the result of the stewardship and sacrifices of the original inhabitants of these territories. We must commit to not repeat past mistakes and to work towards more equitable and respectful relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Acknowledging the territories and the original stewards of these lands is a fundamental responsibility of our organization and part of our commitment to work towards truth and reconciliation.

[Learn more](#)

Introduction

In September 2022, Healthcare Excellence Canada (HEC) launched its Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan. The development of the plan itself was a journey guided by HEC staff, partners, Elders and Knowledge Carriers.

On September 29, HEC staff and leadership came together virtually to celebrate the launch, supported by Algonquin Knowledge Carrier Monique Manatch and Métis Elder Denise McCuaig¹. HEC's senior leadership team presented the Action Plan and provided staff with a structured journal to track learning and reflections at future educational activities. During the event, a video was shared that captured Algonquin Spiritual Advisor Albert Dumont telling the story of the Robin's Nest which was the inspiration for the plan and the artwork created by Simon Brascoupé found in this report.

As part of our Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan, HEC committed to creating and sharing regular updates. Actions 1 and 2 indicate this commitment to be accountable and to share progress publicly. This is HEC's first Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan Annual Report reflecting on the initial year of implementation and to demonstrate our accountability to the goals and actions of the plan.

We are pleased to share the work undertaken by HEC over the past year (September 2022 – September 2023), described under the four categories identified below.

¹ Métis Elder Denise McCuaig supported HEC from 2018–2023 as an Indigenous Mentor and subsequently as Truth and Reconciliation Coach. In March 2023, she joined the organization as the Executive Director of Healthcare Transformation and Capacity Building.



The Update

Throughout the past year, HEC staff, leadership and its Board were provided with ongoing opportunities for learning and self-reflection. Staff were and are regularly encouraged to make time for self-reflection in their journals as part of each learning opportunity.

Learning and development for staff, leadership and the Board

- 3 Embed truth and reconciliation learning objectives within HEC's Employee Professional Development Plan framework.
- 4 Continue to offer cultural safety training with check-in support for HEC staff, senior leadership and Board of Directors.
- 5 Quarterly education sessions offered to staff and partners supporting HEC's work in the healthcare system.
- 7 Create an HEC lending library to support learning for both onsite and remote employees.

3 Reconciliation Development Goal

The Northern and Indigenous Health team collaborated with the People and Culture (Human Resources) team to embed a *Reconciliation Development Goal* within HEC's existing annual Employee Performance and Development Plan (EPDP) framework.

The new Reconciliation Development Goal creates a structure for staff to reflect on their personal areas for improvement specific to reconciliation and to define actions for growth in the areas identified. Staff were supported to identify their goals through conversations with their managers and the Northern and Indigenous Health team and a FAQ document.

The top three themes for HEC staff Reconciliation Development Goals identified in the 2023–24 EPDPs were:

1. Relationship-building with partners and understanding protocols for respectful engagement.
2. Distinctions-based approaches and better understanding Métis and Inuit histories, cultures and contexts.
3. First Nations, Inuit and Métis data sovereignty and governance.

4 San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Online Training

New HEC staff and Board members engaged in structured learning through the [San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Online Training](#). The self-directed online coursework of each HEC cohort was augmented with four live virtual group discussion circles facilitated by Algonquin Knowledge Carrier Monique Manatch and Métis Elder Denise McCuaig in her role as HEC's Truth and Reconciliation Coach.

77%

of HEC staff have completed the San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety online training.

5 Quarterly Learning Opportunities

The Northern and Indigenous Health team hosted quarterly learning opportunities for staff to continue building knowledge of the historical and contemporary contexts and experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis, particularly how the history of colonization has affected the health of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities:



The **Foundations of Understanding Métis** education session was hosted in October 2022 by Métis Elder Denise McCuaig for staff to learn about Métis culture, history and identity.



Sharing Our Stories featured a panel discussion of Métis staff sharing their lived experiences in November 2022.



In May 2023, HEC hosted the **Bringing Them Home: Red Dress Day** event to learn about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQ+.

In August and September 2023, two groups of staff participated in **What is Reconciliation? discussion circles** to dig deeper into the topic of reconciliation and how to embed our commitments to reconciliation into our work at HEC.

In post-event evaluations, staff rated the events as:



Very important for their learning.

With an average rating of:

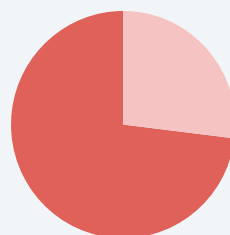
9/10

(1 being "not at all helpful" and 10 being "extremely helpful.")

Attendance ranged from:

32-40

staff members (of HEC's 107 staff) per event.




"I found the event to be a thoughtful mix of historical information and personal stories. That blend of context and experience made the content more nuanced and triggered a lot of self-reflection that I found very meaningful."

—Feedback from an HEC staff member



During the May 2023 event, staff were invited to bring the Faceless Dolls they created during the virtual Faceless Dolls workshop the previous year to add to a quilt now displayed in HEC's office. The quilt was created by the Piecemaker's Quilt Club from Six Nations of the Grand River, whose aim is to make and donate quilts for residential school survivors. HEC is honoured to display this beautiful quilt as a reminder of our learnings and commitments to truth and reconciliation.

7 Staff were also offered a variety of resources to support asynchronous learning:

 An internal SharePoint site hosts a library of resources to support staff learning on a variety of topics (research and data, respectful engagement, systemic racism, etc.) and lists with recommended books, podcasts, movies, etc.

114

unique viewers


5,024

Overall views

44

site visits on average per viewer

 A “First Nations, Inuit and Métis Learning” Microsoft Teams channel for staff to share webinars, events, journal articles and other helpful resources.

 A physical lending library at HEC’s head office in Ottawa with a variety of First Nations, Inuit and Métis fiction and non-fiction books.

Support capacity development in the system

- 22** Create knowledge-sharing opportunities between and among First Nations, Inuit Métis and non-Indigenous health system partners.
- 23** Co-develop and co-design distinctions-based supports for leadership where aligned with the priorities of First Nations, Inuit and Métis health system leaders.
- 24** Share resources and learning opportunities with other organizations, including other pan-Canadian health organizations.

22 Partnerships

23 HEC works collaboratively with organizations through both formal and informal partnerships that support the sharing of knowledge and resources. The principle of reciprocity guides our approach to relationship development, ensuring there is value for all parties involved. This year, HEC supported specific leadership development, workforce wellness and cultural safety projects with: the First Nations Health Managers Association, First Peoples Wellness Circle and Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and Métis Nation – Saskatchewan. We also continued to host the Canadian Northern and Remote Health Network.

24 EXTRA™ Program

HEC’s executive training program for healthcare leadership, EXTRA™, focuses on building the capacities of leaders to improve quality and safety in healthcare. The EXTRA program team is working towards a curriculum that provides EXTRA Fellows (graduates) with the tools to support cultural humility and safety within their organizations. Through the EXTRA curriculum, Fellows are encouraged to explore concepts of privilege and learn about the importance of embedding the priorities of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in their improvement projects.



Internal processes and policies

- 9 Review and update all relevant HEC policies and processes to be reflective of First Nations, Inuit and Métis perspectives, data governance (e.g. Ownership, Control, Access and Possession/Ownership, Control, Access and Stewardship/Inuit Research Principles), and the protection of Traditional Knowledge.



New

- Smudging Policy



Reviewed

- Gift and Honoraria Policy
- Procurement Policy

9 Policies and Procedures

The Northern and Indigenous Health team collaborates with HEC's Corporate Services team to regularly review policies and procedures. Clauses in contracts related to data governance and the protection of Traditional Knowledge were rewritten to be distinctions-based. HEC staff continue to encourage feedback from partners and the communities we work with as we use templates for contracts, consent, honoraria and agreements. As described in the next section, this allows us to build relationships in a way that is reflective of HEC values and the relational ways of knowing and being for First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners.

Build trusting relationships to support meaningful engagement

- 17 Develop and integrate guidance mechanisms into existing HEC program life cycle processes that support staff to include First Nations, Inuit and Métis priorities where appropriate.
- 18 Create and implement advisory mechanisms with representation from First Nations, Inuit and Métis when planning projects aligned with their priorities.

18 Improving Equity in Access to Palliative Care Program

HEC's Improving Equity in Access to Palliative Care program is focused on people experiencing homelessness and vulnerable housing. The program has actively sought to build relationships with, and meaningfully engage, First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals, organizations and communities through the steering committee membership, coaching network, curriculum development and evaluation and as participants of the initiative. The ethical space created through the relationships developed between HEC, the coaches, and the teams has created an opportunity to live out HEC's value of 'innovating courageously.' We have immense gratitude for the willingness of First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners to provide leadership and guidance which has allowed the program to reflect upon, action and change the design, delivery and evaluation of the program.



Knowledge Keeper Larry Frost shares reflections at an Improving Equity in Access to Palliative Care workshop in Toronto, ON, in March 2023.

17 Coaching, Guidance and Building Relationships to Support Meaningful Engagement

HEC had the opportunity to be guided by Elders and Knowledge Keepers over the course of the last few years. Specifically, the Promoting Life Together Collaborative supported us in the development of relationships with individuals whose support carried over across many parts of the organization. Their guidance resulted in significant growth and understanding of our individual and organizational responsibilities to truth and reconciliation. Following the Promoting Life Together Collaborative, HEC developed two formal relationships to continue to support the organization. The first was with an Algonquin Knowledge Carrier who would guide HEC at an organizational level based on the location of HEC’s head office in Ottawa, Ontario, on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin territory. The second was with a Truth and Reconciliation Coach and Métis Elder who would support the staff in program development and learning activities.

Through our experiences with these two roles, we identified the need for more diverse perspectives. Over time, staff engaged more and more with the Knowledge Carrier and the Truth and Reconciliation Coach until the need across the organization outweighed their available time.

This experience is what inspired Action 17: *Develop and integrate guidance mechanisms into existing HEC program life cycle processes that support staff to include First Nations, Inuit and Métis priorities where appropriate.* This Action recognizes that in order to weave the quality and safety perspectives of culturally safe and equitable care and First Nations, Inuit and Métis priorities into our programming, the network that guides our work needed to grow.

To support a distinctions-based approach, we decided to formally engage with three additional individuals: an Inuk Elder, a First Nation Elder and a Métis Elder. As we reflected on how we might undertake the “recruitment” for these roles, we engaged in discussions with the senior leadership team. We understood that best practice standards for recruiting consultants or procurement of services would not necessarily be a successful or appropriate strategy. The importance of a relational approach was highlighted, with a recommendation to change the language from “recruitment” to “engagement.” This relational approach was approved, and an exception to the HEC procurement policy was built into the policy for the engagement of Elders.

To ensure HEC engaged with leaders who are connected to, and recognized by, their community, we worked through existing relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis governments, organizations and individuals to identify potential individuals for the Elder roles. We sent out a role description and an outline of gifts and strengths to people within our network with a request to share it within their networks. This strategy helped to ensure the individuals were connected to their community and were recognized as having the gifts and strengths needed for the role. We were pleasantly surprised to receive more than one recommendation for each role.

Each person was contacted to set up an initial call with the director of the Northern and Indigenous Health team at HEC. In addition to initial introductions, this call was aimed at clarifying the role and providing the individual with some background and history of the organization. If both parties were still interested, a second call was organized that included a member of HEC’s Northern and Indigenous Health team and a member of the senior leadership team. This second conversation provided additional time to “get to know” each other and allowed each party to assess alignment of experience and interest in the role.

We also used this approach to engage with a new Truth and Reconciliation Coach when the existing coach, Métis Elder Denise McCuaig, moved into a senior leadership position with the organization. HEC is honoured to now be engaged in formal relationships with one First Nation Elder, one Inuk Elder, one Métis Elder, the Algonquin Knowledge Carrier and a new Truth and Reconciliation Coach.

The work ahead of us includes creating opportunities for staff and leadership to develop relationships with the Elders and the new Truth and Reconciliation Coach and to create a process for connecting with Elders and others in their networks as HEC staff scope, develop, implement and evaluate programming. We are very grateful that these individuals have chosen to work with us.



Monique Manatch
Algonquin Knowledge Carrier



Bruce Dumont
Métis Elder



Meeka Kakudluk
Inuk Elder



Dalyce Huot
First Nation Elder



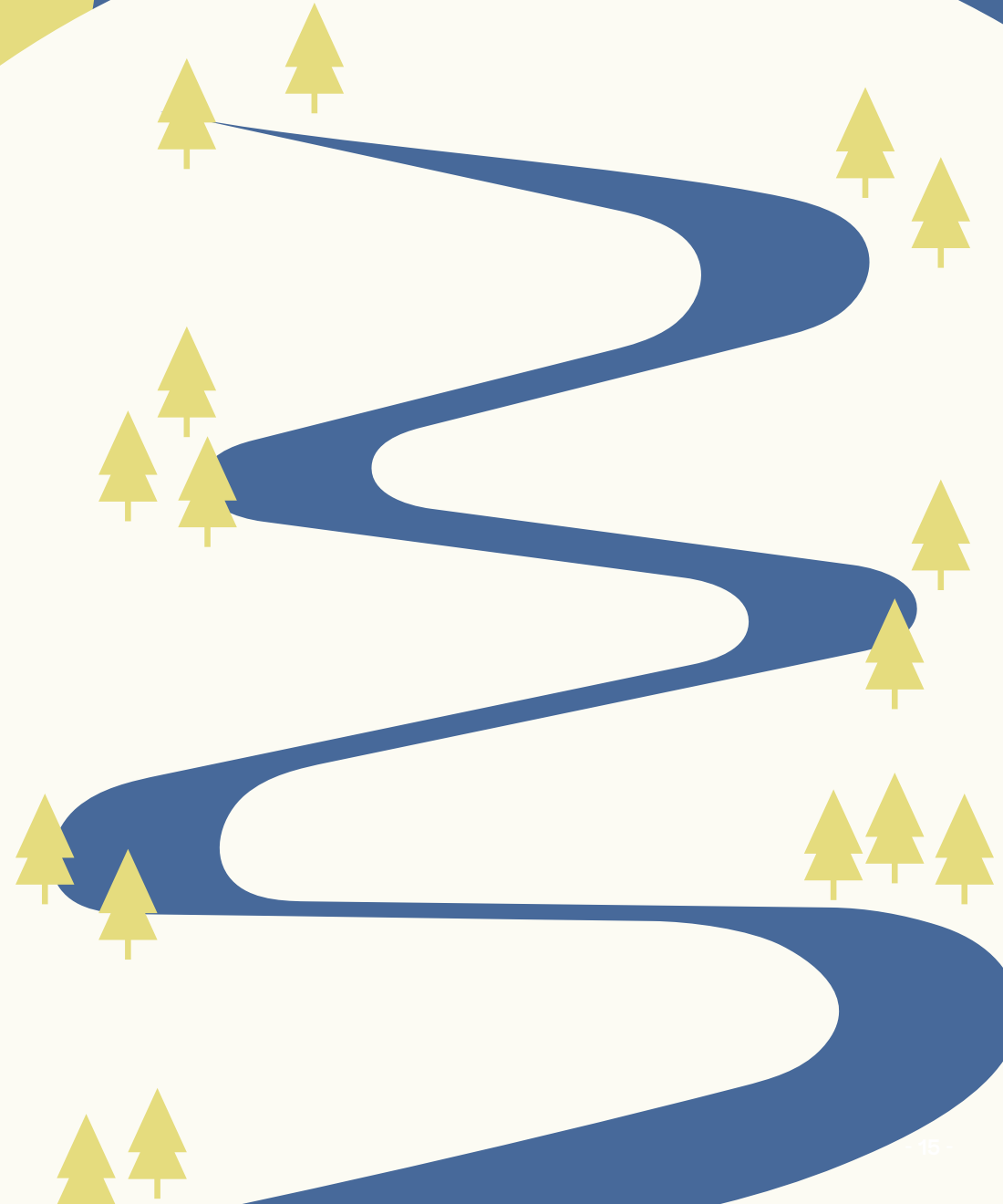
Shannon Dunfield
Truth and Reconciliation Coach

Ongoing Work

As we reflect back on what we have accomplished and look forward to the year ahead of us, we will work on determining our next priorities. Many of the actions require ongoing attention but this reflective process allows us to be responsive to shifting priorities and emerging issues impacting the health and wellness experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

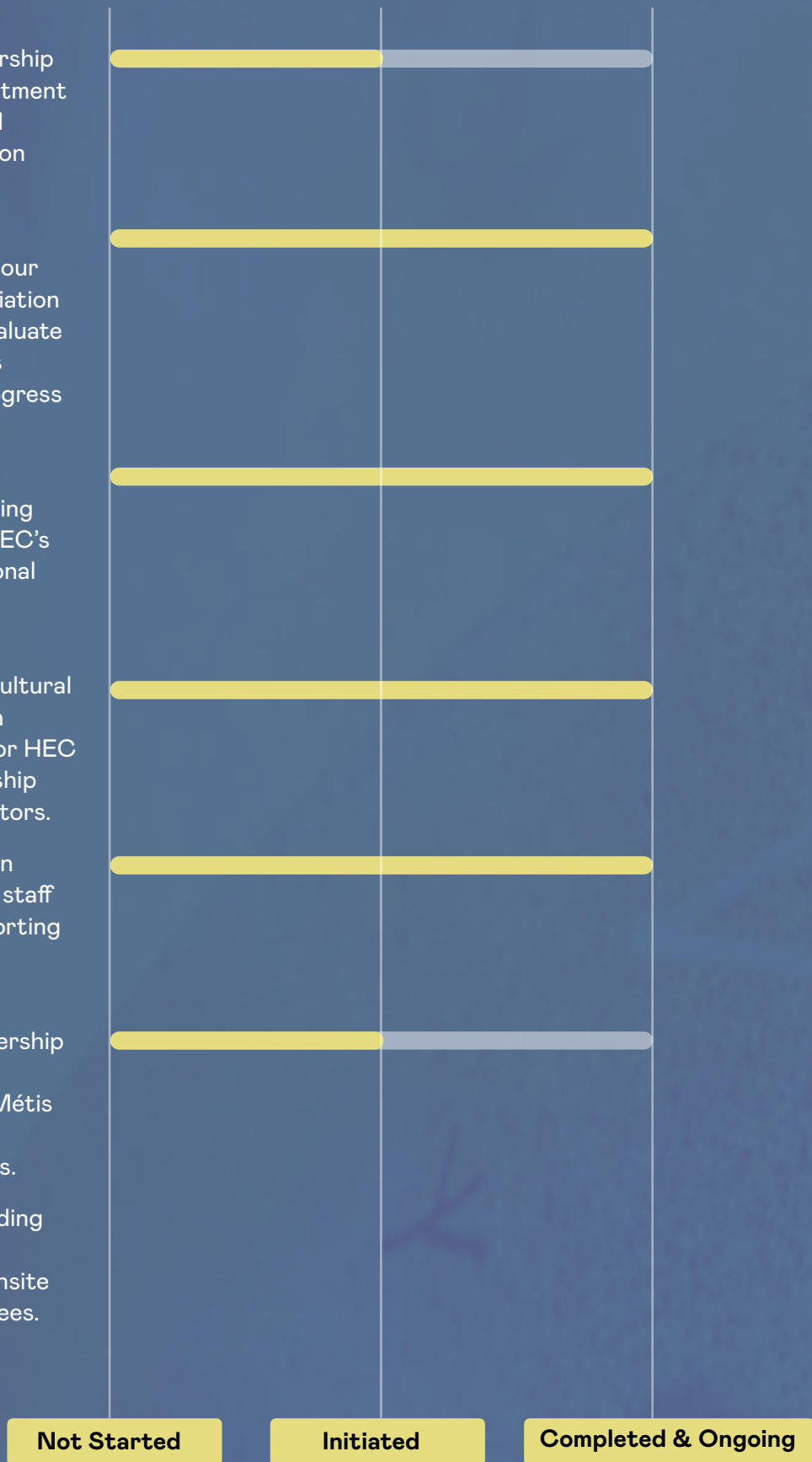
Ongoing work includes the development of an evaluation framework for HEC's Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan, which will help us recognize if we are moving in the right direction. This work is being supported by an Indigenous led research and evaluation company and guided by HEC staff. The evaluation framework will help us adapt and adjust where appropriate.

To demonstrate our continued commitment to the goals and actions of the plan, subsequent reports will follow at regular intervals.



Appendix

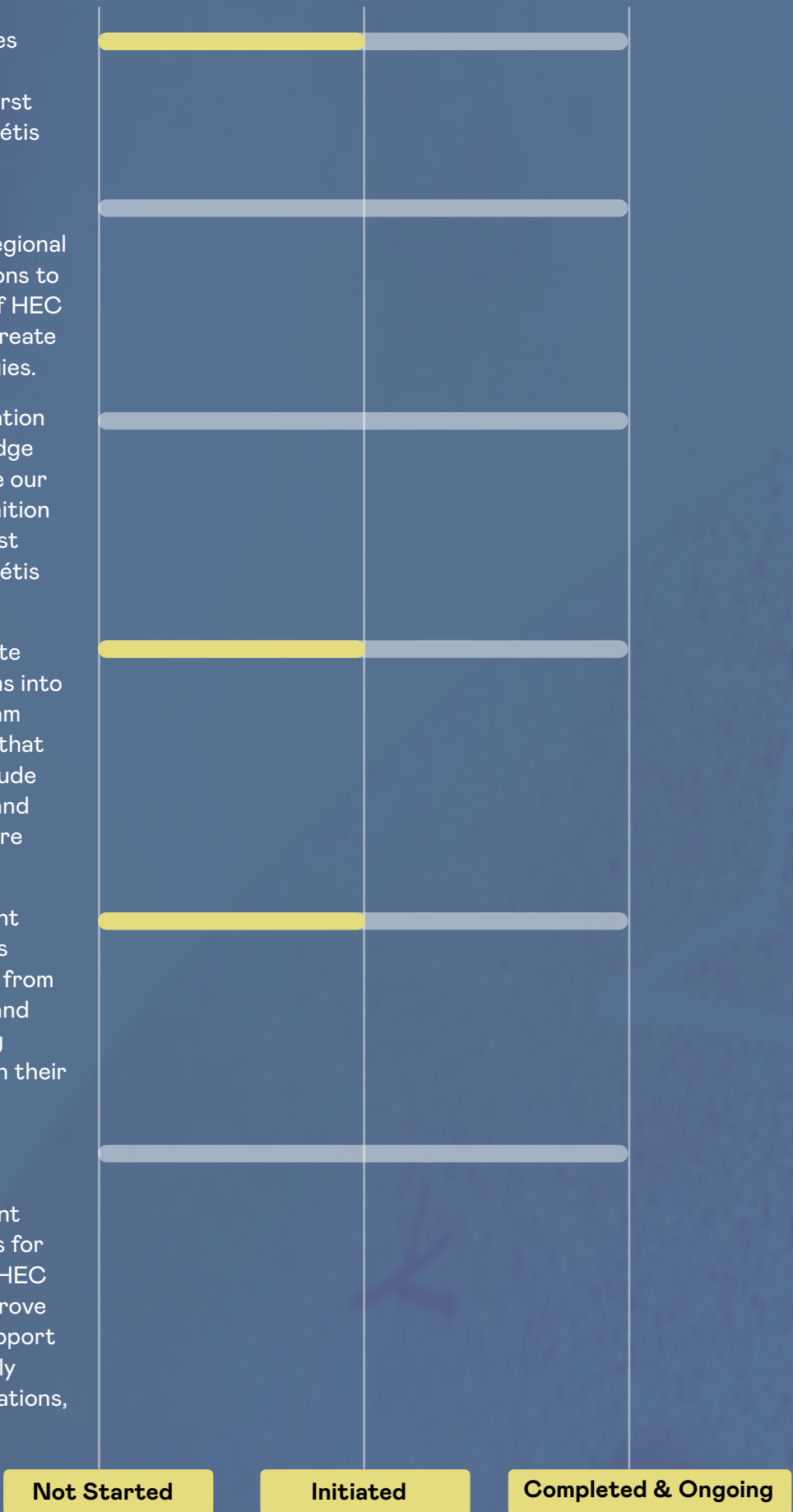
- 1 Demonstrate leadership support and commitment to HEC's Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan.
- 2 Create an annual workplan based on our Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan and evaluate and share progress through annual progress reports.
- 3 Embed truth and reconciliation learning objectives within HEC's Employee Professional Development Plan framework.
- 4 Continue to offer cultural safety training with check-in support for HEC staff, senior leadership and Board of Directors.
- 5 Quarterly education sessions offered to staff and partners supporting HEC's work in the healthcare system.
- 6 HEC staff and leadership participate in First Nations, Inuit and Métis knowledge-sharing events/conferences.
- 7 Create an HEC lending library to support learning for both onsite and remote employees.



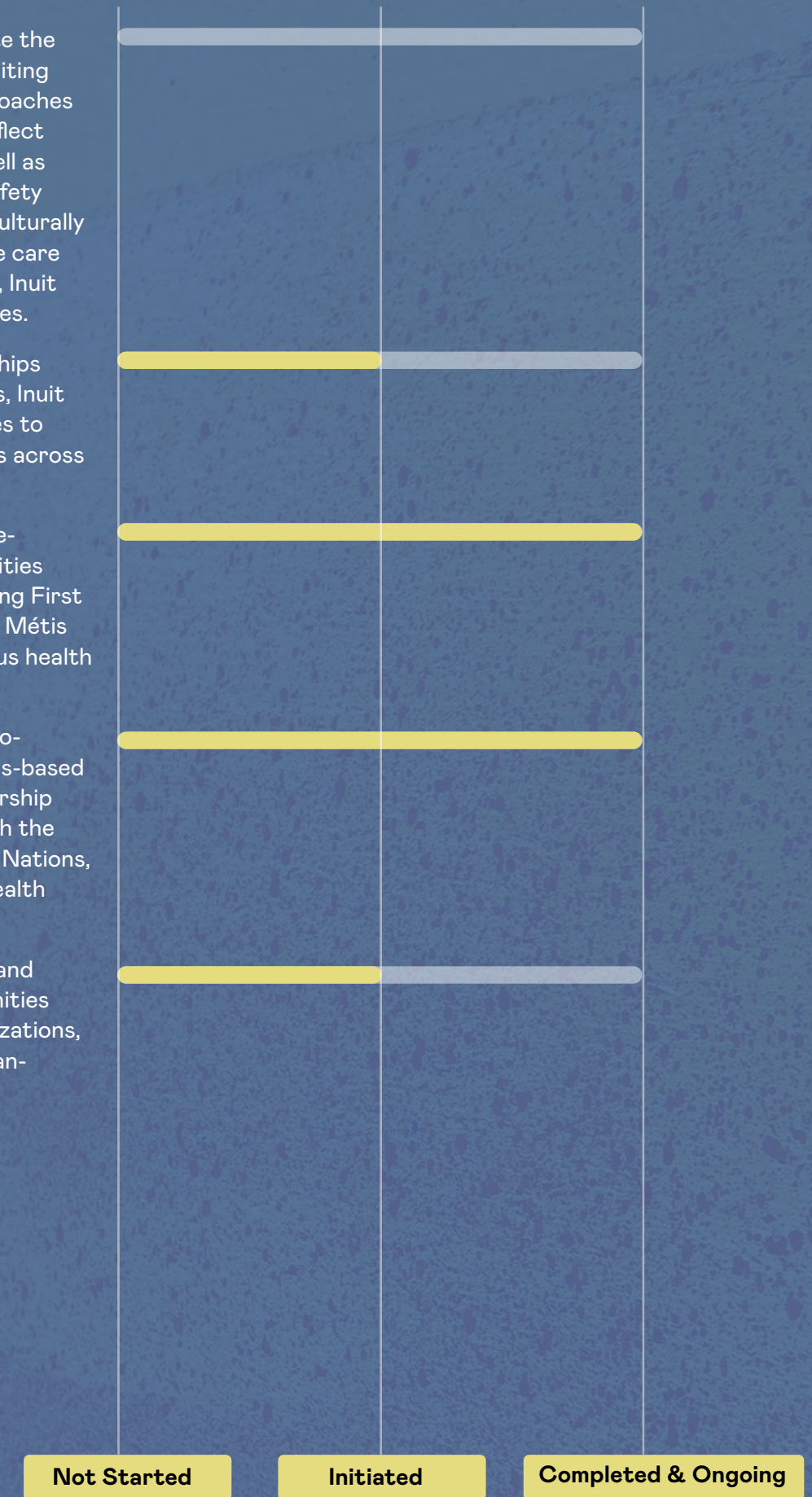
- 8 Create opportunities for HEC's Board of Directors to access learning opportunities and supports for self-reflection.
- 9 Review and update all relevant HEC policies and processes to be reflective of First Nations, Inuit and Métis perspectives, data governance, and the protection of Traditional Knowledge.
- 10 Develop relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis businesses and seek to include them in HEC's Vendor of Record list for goods and services.
- 11 Support the United Nations General Assembly's Call for Action to preserve, revitalize and promote First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages in the work of HEC.
- 12 Collaborate with HEC's People and Culture team to develop recruitment strategies intended to encourage First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals to join HEC.
- 13 Develop, deliver and evaluate the truth and reconciliation content in HEC's onboarding process for new employees and determine their training needs in this area.



- 14** Explore opportunities to develop formal partnerships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations.
- 15** Develop formal partnerships with regional and local organizations to promote the work of HEC and collaborate to create engagement strategies.
- 16** Create a communication strategy for knowledge sharing and increase our reach, brand recognition and trust among First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners.
- 17** Develop and integrate guidance mechanisms into existing HEC program life cycle processes that support staff to include First Nations, Inuit and Métis priorities where appropriate.
- 18** Create and implement advisory mechanisms with representation from First Nations, Inuit and Métis when planning projects aligned with their priorities.
- 19** Develop, deliver and evaluate truth and reconciliation content in training resources for coaches involved in HEC programming to improve their capacity to support teams to meaningfully engage with First Nations, Inuit and Métis.



- 20** Review and update the process for recruiting and onboarding coaches to ensure they reflect HEC values, as well as the quality and safety perspectives of culturally safe and equitable care and First Nations, Inuit and Métis priorities.
- 21** Develop relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis coaches to support programs across HEC.
- 22** Create knowledge-sharing opportunities between and among First Nations, Inuit and Métis and non-Indigenous health system partners.
- 23** Co-develop and co-design distinctions-based support for leadership where aligned with the priorities of First Nations, Inuit and Métis health system leaders.
- 24** Share resources and learning opportunities with other organizations, including other pan-Canadian health organizations.





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