



Integrated Inclusion Framework
2025-2028

KHSC Indigenous Acknowledgement

Shé: kon, Aanii, Wacheya, Kwey Kwey, Tanashi, Greetings

We begin by acknowledging that Kingston Health Sciences Centre is located on the ancestral lands and waters of the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee.

We also serve a wider geographical area that encompasses many Indigenous communities including Tyendinaga, Katarokwi as well as communities within the Weeneebayko Area Health Authority.

We acknowledge and welcome the presence of all Indigenous Peoples, including the Métis, Inuit, and other First Nations who also make this place home. The lands we are on today are recognized in the Two Row Wampum, Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, Treaty 27, and the Crawford Purchase.

To acknowledge this territory is to recognize its longer history, one predating the establishment of the earliest European colonies. It is also to acknowledge this territory's significance for the Indigenous Peoples who lived, and continue to live, upon it and whose practices and spiritualities were and are tied to the land and continue to develop.

We recognize the past and present systemic harms committed against Indigenous Peoples throughout Canada. These atrocities have resulted in continual intergenerational trauma and are enabled by racist attitudes and imperialist and colonial ideologies. They include the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples from their ancestral lands, and acts of cultural genocide by the Crown, the government, and the churches.

As we partner in care, discovery, and learning to achieve better health outcomes for our communities. KHSC is committed to actively advocating for, and acting upon, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action on Health. We commit to moving forward together in the spirit of partnership, respect, compassion, excellence, and innovation. We will do this by learning about histories, Indigenous languages, customs, traditions, and working to integrate these into the care we provide. As a colonial-based institution, we are accountable to Indigenous peoples to make the promise of Truth and Reconciliation real in our communities.

We invite you to reflect on this acknowledgement and your own accountabilities to advance the process of Reconciliation. We are grateful for the opportunity to meet here, and we thank all the generations of people who care for these lands and waters.

Nya:wen, Miigwech, Marci, Thank You





KHSC Inclusion Statement

KHSC is committed to excellence that is fostered by creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for every person who comes here to work, volunteer, learn or receive care. Demonstrating compassion and welcoming all regardless of who they are or where they are from is valued by KHSC.

We acknowledge that structural, institutional, and individual bias exists and have created barriers and negatively impact health. Together, through listening, learning, and taking the necessary actions, we hold each other accountable to build a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture free from discrimination, which is our aim. KHSC has both an obligation and an opportunity to forge new paths, as we work toward common goals where people feel supported and have a sense of belonging.

Why is inclusion important?

Inclusion is about everyone.

When we talk about inclusion, we are talking about diversity, equity, sense of belonging, being a welcoming environment, access to opportunities, and embracing all the things that make us who we are. Inclusion is aspirational but attainable. Improving systems, removing barriers and bias ensures people fully receive appropriate medical care and people can fully contribute at work.

As a business that cares for people, inclusion is part of how we pay attention to individuals and treat the whole person.

We are committed to delivering exceptional care and serving our diverse community. Every patient, family member, and loved one who interacts with KHSC brings unique experiences and needs. To ensure excellence, we must continuously improve and create an environment where everyone feels welcome and confident that their needs will be met—regardless of their identity, background, language, beliefs, age, or any other individual characteristics.

We are also an employer committed to our staff who are educators, researchers, learners, employees, providers, volunteers, contractors, and leaders. Our workforce is also diverse so we must strive to reflect that broader community, embrace ideas, and enable our people to thrive.

An integrated inclusion framework is another way to affirm what we value. It brings to life how we demonstrate respect and compassion for those we care for and each other as well as opportunities for partnering in care to drive excellence, and create new ways of being.

Our Values

Compassion Respect Partnership
Excellence Innovation



Why create an integrated inclusion framework?

An integrated inclusion framework provides us a shared way to approach inclusion. It helps us to identify gaps and create improvements that will make a difference and have a lasting impact to those we serve and those among our workforce.

The framework brings intention applying an inclusion lens to our actions. While there are many activities happening across KHSC that contribute to inclusion, we need to focus our efforts in the areas that are needed most in our local context. The framework helps us to align our efforts and bring an inclusion lens to our priorities and our decision-making by making these bundled areas of focus more visible.

Our integrated inclusion framework



How was this integrated inclusion framework created?

Our approach when we began this journey toward greater inclusion was based on our sincere desire to Listen, Learn, and Improve. This perpetual cycle continues throughout the approach to our integrated framework and these principles carry forward in how we bring it to life.

Listen

To honour our commitment to obtaining guidance from our people to drive priorities under inclusion, we approached framework by engaging diverse voices internally and externally as individuals and groups to ensure we were looking at what matters most to our communities connected to KHSC. It is important that our approach to inclusion is informed by our local context so while we looked at the broader regulatory, legislative, policy and peer environment, we also reviewed other inputs such as a staff survey to more extensively engage voices to contribute to the direction forward. The design process enabled greater co-creation to reflect the voices and perspectives we heard.

Learn

We are committed to learn from each other. As we know more, we can do more. We have learned that enhancing either the care or the work environment from an inclusion lens, it will positively impact the other given the patient and staff are inextricably linked in so many aspects of the experience. The framework is integrated to reflect all people whether they are seeking care or are working at KHSC. We have also learned that several aspects that relate to equity or inclusion are interdependent and without clear boundaries or multi-faceted. The integrated inclusion framework accounts for this in the bundles of work that have been created and in the initiatives that will flow from those bundles to better reflect the reality of KHSC rather than taking a siloed approach. Opportunities can have singular or multiple benefits so that is our gathering place where we start to provide focus areas that if we make improvements, we will make strides toward achieving inclusion.

Improve

Alongside learning and unlearning, we know this work is complex without a specific end point. This continuous improvement cycle calls on us to listen and engage voices on an ongoing basis, take what we learn, and while we may not always get it right, we strive to make progress to continue our journey along the way. By setting our goals with intention, we can track our improvements to see how we are doing and look for new opportunities to focus on.



How will we advance inclusion?

It is important to not only highlight the areas where we will be making our efforts known (the ‘what’), but also to be deliberate about the way in which we are doing it (the ‘how’).

We are approaching this work using these fundamental principles:

Values Driven

We will ensure our values of Compassion, Respect, Partnership, Excellence, and Innovation are at the heart of the work. It is important to not only focus on what we do but how we do it. Living our values means checking ourselves, infusing in decision-making and choices, and keeping these at the forefront of all the bundles.

Engaging Voices

We will look to our internal and external community and interest holders to listen to what is most important with a locally driven mandate. Our aim is also to elevate voices that may not have felt heard to seek greater understanding and perspectives. This approach goes together with being person-centered.

Humility

Our people, patients and families give us insights and allow us to pay attention to things that we may not have considered. Our approach gives us an opportunity to sit side by side and listen to stay grounded and shine a light on bottom-up approaches.

Continuous Learning

We will be in a state of perpetual learning and unlearning to continue to evolve our understanding and fuel our growth. While we may not always get it right, we will commit to seek out knowledge, address issues and keep future focussed.



While KHSC has made strides in advancing equity and inclusion, we have heard that there is still work to do. Commitments in the highlighted areas represent the overarching work that falls under those bundles which build the conditions to improve how people experience the care and work environment. There is no single solution to achieving inclusion—many of these bundles are interconnected, influencing, and reinforcing one another. The experience of inclusion is shaped by multiple factors, and progress in each area will collectively drive meaningful change.

Integrated Inclusion Framework Commitment

Bundle	Commitment	Outcomes
 Access	We commit to improve systems, structures, and spaces to better meet the diverse needs of our people, patients, and community.	Identified physical, structural and system barriers are reduced.
 Equitable Care	We commit to engage and collaborate with interest holders and amplify diverse and marginalized voices to promote equitable, high-quality care for all patients.	Inequities are identified, and quality improvements have occurred for more optimal care delivery.
 Data Informed	We commit to collecting and analyzing data to identify disparities and drive evidence-based interventions for our patients, families, and staff.	We have targeted action plans to address specific identified gaps.
 Identity	We commit to celebrate and support all identities at KHSC and in the communities we serve, ensuring that everyone feels represented, reflected, and respected.	Diverse linguistic and cultural identities are supported through recognition, practices, interactions, and active offers of interpreter services to improve the patient care journey.
 Anti-Racism	We commit to recognize, address, and work to dismantle systemic racism within our workforce, patient care, and organizational practices.	Strategies to address racism are implemented with a focus on interrupting bias, elevating voices and support for people impacted.
 Indigeneity	We commit to listen to and learn from Indigenous communities, honouring and supporting Indigenous rights, traditions, knowledge, and ways of knowing, and we will work to integrate these into the care we provide.	Indigenous traditions, practices, and perspectives are respected and integrated to provide culturally safer care and supported through improved staff knowledge.
 Education	We commit to fostering an inclusive culture by equipping staff, physicians, and volunteers with the knowledge and skills to recognize, challenge and address biases and inequities.	Staff complete inclusion training and a comprehensive suite of continuous learning opportunities are available.
 Leadership	We commit to being the role models for inclusive leadership by elevating voices, allocating resources, exemplifying equity, fostering belonging and inspiring others through our actions and accountability.	Inclusive leadership practices are integrated into our processes and operations that are supported by ongoing capacity building.

Strategy to Action

What process will we use to work on these Bundles?

Our process incorporates four stages for our initiatives to help us organize this work. We pay attention to identify specific challenges to undertake then seek to understand those root causes and explore potential barriers. Once clarified, we tackle those challenges to make improvements and embed those in our processes and approach going forward.



Identify

- what we hear
- look for gaps



Interpret

- understand
- clarify barriers



Improve

- take action
- incremental improvement



Incorporate

- embed success
- new ways of being

What do the Bundle areas
of Focus mean?



Access

Systems, structures, and spaces impact people differently. Barriers – whether they are physical or systemic, individual, or structural – can create challenges for people in accessing or engaging with services, spaces, and opportunities. By addressing these barriers, we can foster an environment where all individuals have the support and resources they need, and we can create better pathways for improvement.

Includes:

- Policies & Practices
- Access to Appropriate Care
- Access to Opportunities
- Redevelopment processes and the built environment
- Clinical and Business systems
- Building diverse teams

Impact to patients and families

Access means...
When I come to KHSC I can get the care I need and can get to where I am going without barriers. The physical spaces and services are available to me as they would be to any other person who is seeking or receiving care.

Impact to staff

Access means...
I can fully participate in the workplace and unnecessary barriers are removed. The practices support my access to opportunities and there are supports available to accommodate my unique needs.



Equitable Care

Health equity is the foundation of a just healthcare system, where every individual, regardless of their background or circumstances, can achieve their best possible health. It requires addressing the structural and social factors that contribute to health disparities and ensuring that care is accessible, inclusive, and tailored to the needs of the patient and their families. Tackling the impact of social determinants of health and working to eliminate systemic inequities ensures that people receive the care necessary to achieve optimal health outcomes.

Includes:

- Priority populations- Francophone community, Indigenous Health, Black Health
- 2SLGBTQIA+, Disability & Access & Neurodiversity
- Understanding disparities and social determinants of health
- Racial and Ethnic Diversity, Immigrant, Newcomers, and Refugee Health
- Equity oriented health care, Patient Safety
- Inclusive Service Design

Impact to patients and families

Equitable care means...
I receive treatment that is tailored to my needs and my experience is a positive one. I have confidence the care received is optimal and I am not being treated differently based on who I am or perceptions about me. I believe there is a greater understanding and knowledge of all the factors influencing my health.

Impact to staff

Equitable care means...
I treat everyone with respect and focus on their individual care needs regardless of who they are. I respect people and ensure they have what they need to ensure the best outcomes for them.



Data Informed

Decisions and actions need to be guided by data to ensure they are evidence-based and reflective of real needs. The collection and use of demographic, qualitative, and quantitative data from staff and patients will be leveraged to inform strategic decisions. This approach helps safeguard against assumptions, enables progress to be measured, efforts to be continuously refined, and areas for improvement identified for all people to create targeted strategies grounded in these insights.

Includes:

- Data Collection (including demographic data)
- System Configuration
- Identify and set key performance indicators.
- Evaluation/reporting

Impact to patients and families

Data Informed means...
When I come to KHSC information regarding my unique needs are considered. If there are differences that may impact on my care, they are highlighted to achieve better outcomes and supports are made available to me.

Impact to staff

Data Informed means...
I know that decisions are driven and inspired by information we gather to achieve a sense of fairness. There is transparency that reassures me actions are not taken in an arbitrary manner.



Identity

Identity is unique to each person. The demographics of our community, including our staff, patients, and families, are continuously developing reflecting a growing diversity of identities. Recognizing and embracing diversity fosters an environment where people are guided by respect, ensuring recognition, acknowledgement, support, and more equitable care. The intersection of identities also may create compounding challenges that are part of making it even more complex to address needs and create connections.

Includes:

- Staff Community Groups
- Linguistic and Cultural Identity
- Francophone community
- Gender

Impact to patients and families

Identity means...
I am respected and welcomed regardless of my identity. My name, my language, my gender, or any other personal characteristic is known and understood so I receive supports and respect throughout my episodes of care.

Impact to staff

Identity means...
I can be who I am to be a fully contributing member of staff. I feel supported and I am treated with respect.



Anti-Racism

Anti-racism is a proactive approach to challenging and dismantling racism in all its forms, both within systems and individual behaviours. It requires intentional efforts to recognize and address racial biases, discrimination, and inequities that harm individuals and communities. An anti-racist environment ensures that racism is not tolerated and that all individuals, regardless of race, feel safe, valued, and empowered, with access to fair, respectful treatment, and processes as well as more culturally competent care.

Includes:

- Anti-Indigenous, Anti-Black Racism
- Community Campaigns
- Safety
- Unconscious Bias

Impact to patients and families

Anti-Racism means...
I do not feel that I am treated differently based on my race and bias does not impact on my care. I feel safe and appreciated for who I am and not harmed because of uninformed or outdated beliefs.

Impact to staff

Anti-Racism means...
Systems and processes are reviewed to reduce racial bias and discrimination. Individual behaviours are addressed if they do not support fair, equitable and respectful treatment. Differences are celebrated.



Indigeneity

Colonization, intergenerational trauma, and systemic inequities have contributed to health disparities among Indigenous peoples. Integrating these insights with humility and respect, healthcare services must be culturally safer, more accessible, and responsive to the specific needs of Indigenous communities, including the incorporation of traditional healing practices, perspectives, and values.

Includes:

- Cultural Safety and Competency
- Respect for Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Healing
- Indigenous Health Equity and Access
- Community Engagement and Partnerships
- Truth and Reconciliation

Impact to patients and families

Indigeneity means...
Indigenous culture and traditions are respected, and world views are embraced as part of the healing journey. There is a greater sense of equity, what is needed to deliver culturally safer care and Indigenous people are viewed as partners in care. Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action are brought to life.

Impact to staff

Indigeneity means...
I am more aware of Indigenous healing practices, and I have competence to deliver better care. I understand Indigenous history and impacts, and I am equipped to be responsive to those needs. As an Indigenous staff member, I feel a sense of belonging and I am respected.



Education

Education plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of inclusion by increasing awareness, compassion and understanding. Knowledge and actions empower individuals to recognize inequities, challenge biases and develop the skills needed to create a more inclusive environment, drive excellence and quality. Providing learning opportunities increases the breadth of reach to build capacity to make this a collective and collaborative effort.

Includes:

- Continuous learning (and unlearning)
- Foundations, exploration, and active practice
- Communication
- Access to information supports

Impact to patients and families

Education means...
Staff are knowledgeable about my diverse needs and partner with me to ensure excellence and understanding. I am treated with compassion as a whole person.

Impact to staff

Education means...
I have access to learning to feel competent and confident in my role to support patients and families. If I do not know something, there are supports available to assist me.



Leadership

Leaders shape the culture, policies, and practices that define the care and workplace environments. Their actions and decisions have an outsized impact on people who work, learn, or receive care at KHSC. To achieve a more inclusive care and work environment we need leaders to model our values and be guided by principles of equity. Leaders are called upon to embrace and promote inclusion, take responsibility for outcomes, and foster trust. Skilled leadership demonstrate a commitment that inspires others to advance inclusion and health equity. Leadership from the organization's perspective means leading the way in our region and sometimes creating new paths that have not existed before.

Includes:

- Leadership Development
- Leadership Commitment
- Accountability Systems
- Seeking Opportunities

Impact to patients and families

Leadership means...
When I come to KHSC I am respected and welcomed. I have confidence in the people to take care of my needs regardless of who I am, and I feel it reflected in the processes and my care.

Impact to staff

Leadership means...
I feel valued and supported if issues come up and it is a workplace where I have opportunities to grow and thrive regardless of my job or who I am.

I have confidence in my leader to understand and create an inclusive environment.

What do the actions look like?

To be responsive to the emerging needs of people, the ever-changing environment, and potential opportunities, each year we will identify actions and tactics to achieve the desired outcomes. These priorities may encompass several bundles to stack the impact from the improvement. Over the 3-year period, we will have had actions in all the identified bundles.

Roll out foundational inclusion training to employees

This action supports:

Education
Anti-Racism
Leadership



Increase knowledge and awareness regarding Indigenous Cultural Safety

This action supports:

Indigeneity
Education
Anti-Racism



Improve Active Offer of French Language Services

This action supports:

Access
Identity
Equitable Care



Expand data collection for staff and patients to identify gaps and support future decision-making

This action supports:

Data Informed
Equitable Care
Access



Where does this integrated inclusion framework fit with other KHSC priorities?

Inclusion is called out and solidified in our KHSC strategy through the **Strategic Directions**. There are multi-layers where inclusion will help us to advance quality, care, recruitment, and retention with the overarching goal to create an inclusive environment for patients, families and everyone who works, learns, and volunteers at KHSC to achieve a culturally safer care environment that values and respects diversity.

Strategic Direction 1 Ensure quality in every patient experience

Build a quality framework that aligns clinical processes and financial investments with quality standards, evidence-based practices and targeted improvements that drive outcomes and care experiences that matter to the people we serve

Inclusion links to quality.

The six aims of quality care include delivering safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable care. These aims are also some of the cornerstones of inclusion. To be effective means providing access equitably, matching the care to the needs without delay due to language challenges or assumptions, and providing a respectful environment that is culturally safer all contribute to being patient centered. Making improvements to the patient care experience requires focus on individual needs, best evidence, and targeted actions which in turn should drive decisions for the best individual outcomes. Meeting people where they are and who they are ensures we deliver quality care.



Strategic Direction 2 Nurture our passion for caring, leading and learning

Implement innovative 'people practices' that attract and retain the best and brightest people

Create a positive, engaging environment for our people

Enhance resources for employee training

Provide time, support and continual opportunities for leaders to learn, develop and grow

Inclusion links to engagement, wellness, and safety.

Our people practices need to be inclusive to attract and retain our best people. Feeling like you belong in the organization will make it more likely you will stay and contribute your best work. Inclusion is a component of psychological safety and impacts overall well-being which keeps our people engaged and at work. To shape an inclusive environment, our people and leaders need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills with a focus on learning and development to be applied to both their peers and their patients.



Strategic Direction 3 Improve the health of our communities through partnership and innovation

We have one, accessible, information system that supports a coordinated patient journey.

Inclusion lives through people and our systems.

With one regional information system, inclusion practices can have far reaching impacts. From the first encounter and throughout the care journey, information captured influences subsequent visits and experiences, so we need to pay attention to how we embed inclusion at the system level and utilize the information to improve the consistency of that experience.

Strategic Direction 5 Advance equity, inclusion and diversity and address racism to achieve better outcomes for patients, families, providers and staff

Create an inclusive environment for patients, families and everyone who works, learns and volunteers at KHSC

Implement our plan to improve culturally safe care for Francophone and Indigenous populations

Implement our integrated inclusion framework

KHSC offers a culturally safe care environment that values and respects diversity

Inclusion contributes to better outcomes.

The update to the last strategic plan included a new specific direction related to creating a more inclusive environment to deliver culturally safer care. Specific populations were highlighted and a commitment to build an integrated inclusion framework to assist in guiding this work and take a deeper dive into how we can contribute to improved, more equitable care.



Inclusion is part of our Employee and Volunteer Strategic Plan Framework

Our People Strategic Framework highlights the focus on recruiting, retaining, and reskilling our people. Inclusion is necessary to create a sense of belonging and we need to assist all of those in a lead role with the skills needed to demonstrate inclusive leadership with their teams.



Retain Wellness & Engagement Priorities

Consistent Inclusion

At KHSC, inclusion is more than a policy – it's a lived experience. Every person feels valued and integrated into our vibrant community, creating a true sense of belonging.

Empowered Leaders

KHSC equips its leaders with the right tools, skills, and time to effectively guide and support their teams, ensuring exceptional management and operational success.



Conclusion

We will continue our journey toward inclusion for everyone who works, learns, volunteers, or receives care at KHSC. This integrated inclusion framework contributes to building up from the foundation to advance inclusion with a more targeted approach to see greater progress on inclusion. Each bundle will grow and develop, and the actions contained in each will lead us to uncover more as we learn and discover along the way. Each person deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, and compassion while their individual needs are supported. As we pursue excellence for our community inside and outside of our walls, KHSC remains committed to Listening, Learning and Taking Actions to empower and enable all of us to be contributors to inclusion.



Kingston Health
Sciences Centre