

RESULTS AT A GLANCE – Evaluation of the Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative 2013-2014 to 2017-2018

Introduction

- Funding is provided through contribution agreements for activities to increase the number of First Nations, Inuit and Métis workers in the health care field, and to ensure that community-based workers are trained and certified to improve the quality and consistency of health care services provided in First Nations and Inuit communities.

Four point five million dollars is provided through two streams:

1. *Stream 1* - (\$3.0 million/year) – provides funding to Indspire, an Indigenous-led registered national charity, for scholarships and bursaries to First Nations, Inuit and Metis students in post-secondary education programs that lead to health careers.

2. *Stream 2* (\$1.5 million/year) – provides funding for the training of community based health care workers and health managers (in non-registered professions) working in health promotion and disease prevention in First Nations and Inuit communities.

- The intended outcomes of the Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative (AHHRI) are: Indigenous people participate in post-secondary education leading to health careers; community-based workers are trained to improve the quality and consistency of health care services in First Nations and Inuit communities; greater capacity of community health workers and health managers working in First Nation and Inuit communities; and Indigenous people are working in the health sector.
- Expenditures for AHHRI are approximately \$4.5 million per year.

What the evaluation found

- There is a continued need for programming that aims to increase the number of Indigenous health workers, address financial barriers to accessing health studies and develop the capacity of First Nations and Inuit community health workers.
- Over the evaluation period, 3,016 AHHRI Stream 1 scholarships and bursaries contributed to helping approximately 765 Indigenous students per year to participate in health post-secondary studies. The financial assistance covered approximately 17 percent of student financial needs and is perceived as helping them to pursue their studies. Overall, the majority of students helped through AHHRI Stream 1 worked in a field related to their studies and served the Indigenous population as part of their work.
- The application process for Stream 1 financial assistance is seen as being difficult for students to complete. As well, a lack of prerequisite education is one of the biggest barriers faced by Indigenous people in terms of accessing health studies. Key informants identified a need to do more to help prospective student obtain the necessary skills to enroll in post-secondary health programs.
- AHHRI Stream 2 funding is seen as helping to increase the qualifications of health workers in communities as well as contributing to improve health services.
- AHHRI has contributed to improving the capacity of First Nations communities to influence and control their health services by funding the creation of the First Nations Health Managers Association and the establishment of its certification program for health managers.
- Challenges related to the design and delivery of Stream 2 pertain to the limited amount of funding compared to the existing needs, and the types of training that are eligible for funding.

Recommendations and Responses

- 1. Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) should work with Indspire to increase accessibility to post-secondary education in the health field by:**
 - a. Streamlining the application process to make it easier to complete.**
 - b. Developing supports to help students complete prerequisite courses.**
 - c. Building on existing outreach activities to increase the promotion of health careers across communities.**

Response:

ISC will engage in talks with Indspire regarding recommendations A and C in order to streamline the application process for students and increase the promotion of health careers. Recommendation B will be addressed by the ISC - ESDPP's University and College Entrance Preparation Program, which provides financial assistance to First Nation and eligible Inuit students enrolled in university or college entrance programs to help them obtain the academic level required to enter a degree and anticipated funding included in the proposed Inuit and Métis Nation strategies.

- 2. Indigenous Services Canada should ensure that training activities meet the needs of communities by:**
 - a. Engaging with communities to determine the best way to utilise the Stream 2 funding.**
 - b. Increasing the coordination of AHHRI training activities with other similar ISC initiatives.**

Response:

ISC will engage with regional partners/communities and initiate a call out ensuring a training plan has been developed. ISC will also work to increase the coordination of and communication about AHHRI training activities with other program areas by sending out the AHHRI training guidelines to program areas. Once the Management Operational Plan has been approved, the approved list of activities will also be sent out.

About this evaluation

The evaluation assessed the relevance, performance, and efficiency of AHHRI for the period of April 2013 to March 2018. Recognizing that AHHRI represents a small program investment, the evaluation team used a calibrated approach that focused on the use of qualitative data and existing monitoring data collected by Indspire, the recipient-organization responsible for delivering Stream 1 scholarships and bursaries.