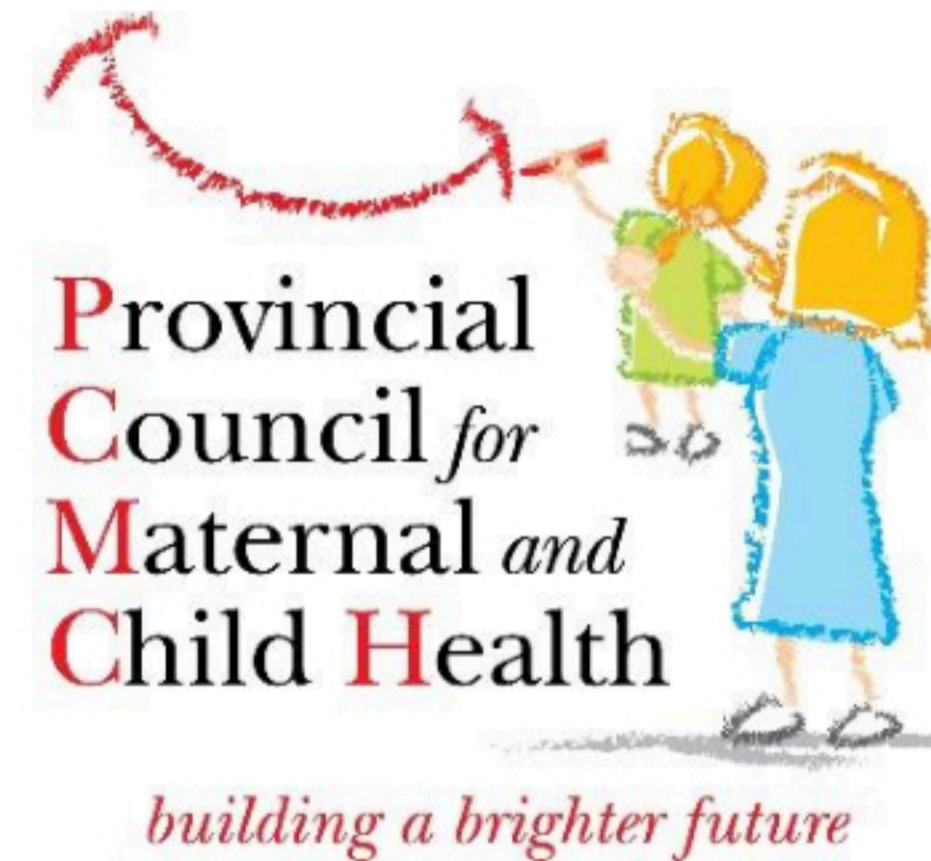




#IndigenousHistoryMonth
#healthequity
#PCMCH



Bruce Squires is the President of McMaster Children's Hospital (MCH), the VP of Women's and Children's Health at Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS), a member of PCMCH's Governing Council and Co-Chair of PCMCH's Child and Youth Committee. In recognition of Indigenous History Month, PCMCH asked him to share his thoughts on the importance of healthcare equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and some of the ways he and MCH are engaging with Indigenous peoples and communities.

PCMCH: From your perspective, why is fostering equity, diversity and inclusion in the reproductive, neonatal and paediatric health system important?

Bruce Squires (BS): *There is really strong evidence that maternal, child and youth health outcomes are inequitable for different groups internationally, nationally, provincially, regionally and locally. In fact, health outcomes and experiences for Indigenous children, youth and families are among the very worst in the world. Unless we actively prioritize addressing these inequities, children, youth and families will continue to experience poorer outcomes in the moment, and throughout their life trajectories, in terms of physical, emotional, spiritual, developmental and economic health.*

Addressing the causes of health inequities involves change at multiple levels – societal, institutional, organizational and individual. Leaders in maternal, newborn, child and youth health have a special responsibility to seek to influence, drive and sustain change across all of those levels.

PCMCH: Thinking about McMaster Children's Hospital (MCH), what has made a key difference in how care is provided to/with Indigenous persons that you think would be helpful for others to know about?

BS: *MCH has only begun to make some small differences in how we provide care to Indigenous individuals and families. These differences are the result of ideas that came*

from Indigenous peoples and were led by the Indigenous community, with some co-design with our teams at MCH. These include:

- 1. The creation of Makayla's Room, a dedicated, safe and welcoming space for Indigenous patients and their families. The room also helps to promote reconciliation and learning about Indigenous culture and healthcare among all MCH staff and families. The room is a result of Makayla's inspiration, and the guidance of her family and Indigenous community leaders. More information about Makayla's Room can be found on Hamilton Health Sciences website at: <https://bit.ly/3bCnFFp>*
- 2. Aboriginal Patient Navigator services are available to support patients and their families through their healthcare journey. This is done in partnership with De dwa da dehs nye>s, and the services may include attending clinic visits, helping patients and families communicate with members of their healthcare team, arranging language and cultural translation services, and helping patients connect with traditional Aboriginal healers. This program is available to patients and their family members who self-identify as having Aboriginal ancestry or as being part of an Aboriginal family.*
- 3. A resource called Supporting Indigenous Patients and Families was developed that identifies Indigenous supports available to Indigenous patients and families at MCH, both in and outside of the hospital.*
- 4. Education and learning opportunities for MCH/HHS staff and physicians are being provided to increase understanding, awareness and cultural sensitivity. For example, we developed a Calendar of Learning around Orange Shirt Day that consists of over 94 learning opportunities that align with the Calls to Action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Staff are encouraged to engage in these learning opportunities, which include videos, readings and online courses.*