

Annual Report 2023-2024

The Indigenous Services Canada Ombuds

Amplifying the Voices of ISC Frontline Service Providers



Kiwedinhigan (Compass) by Emily Brascoupe-Hoefler



Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

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www.canada.ca/indigenous-services-canada

1-800-567-9604

TTY only 1-866-553-0554

Catalogue: R119-6E-PDF

ISSN: 2819-0661

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This publication is also available in French under the title: Rapport annuel du Bureau de l'ombuds de Services aux Autochtones Canada

Amplifying the Voices of ISC Frontline Service Providers

A heartfelt thank you to Emily Brascoupe-Hoefler for gifting the Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Ombuds office her artwork. These gifts have contributed not only to our branding, but to this report, and past ISC Ombuds office projects. Emily is a member of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, living in the heart of Algonquin Territory, Ottawa. She is a mixed-media artist, educator, and senior policy analyst at ISC.

The piece depicts a flower as the focal point, with foliage around it. Each are beautiful parts of nature that we as humans need to connect with, to be healthy. Walks in nature and being surrounded by wildlife do wonders for our physical and mental health. We go to parks, bask in the beauty of the flowers, the trees, and nature almost as if it were providing a therapeutic, or cathartic service to us. We're reminded of the courage and strength of the frontline service providers who serve Indigenous partners. This exclusive birch bark biting piece links nature and well-being. This connection is supported by frontline service providers.



Kiwedinòhigan (Compass) by Emily Brascoupe-Hoefler

– Dedication by Emily Brascoupe-Hoefler



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Message from the Ombuds

Dear colleagues,

It's my honour to present the ISC Ombuds office Annual Report for 2023 to 2024, which we've dedicated to ISC's frontline service providers (FSP).

The goal of this report is to bring to light the incredible efforts of those who work tirelessly on the frontline:

- nurses
- environmental public health officers (EPHOs)
- program officers
- educators
- and many others

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the FSPs who took the time to meet with the ISC Ombuds team to share their lived realities and truths. Their willingness to open up about their experiences isn't only courageous, but crucial to the ongoing mission of this department. This report is dedicated to amplifying their voices and recognizing their contributions as vital to the people we serve. Our mission in the pages that follow is to honour the truths shared. My hope is to highlight the unique quality of our department and to acknowledge the dedication, passion and determination of our frontline staff.

We recognize that this report isn't exhaustive, as we didn't meet with every team or individual who works on the frontline. Nonetheless, the insights we gathered from those we did engage with provide a critical overview of the hard work, excellence, integrity, and dedication demonstrated daily by those on the frontline. They also highlight the challenges, gaps, and needs that exist. By acknowledging and addressing them as best as possible, we can ensure that outcomes reflect our department's mission.

While this report captures the voices we could connect with, it's important to acknowledge the many voices we didn't hear. We hope to capture their valuable insights and perspectives as we continue to meet and engage colleagues across ISC, as we remain committed to continuing this engagement. This report builds on the reporting done by FSPs, managers, and supporting staff members to highlight critical gaps. If left unaddressed, these gaps risk the health and well-being of our staff and community members.

Therefore, this report is also a call to action. It urges us all to listen actively and mindfully, and to take the concerns of our FSPs seriously. It urges us to value the work of our fellow ISC employees while applying the head, heart, and hand approach. This approach means to listen, feel, and act upon our humility and to practise empathy. It also means to act with compassion in acknowledging their challenges and in implementing the critical changes they've called for. Here at ISC, I know we can do this. I have seen the incredible efforts of our colleagues across the department to support the health and well-being of their teams, and I have seen how

these efforts have supported meaningful and compassionate change. I recognized, and highlighted, these efforts in my Wise Practices Report. [Read the report on Supporting Workplace Wellness through ISC Wise Practices, 2023 to 2024.](#)

I know there is much work left to do and many more challenges ahead. I also know we each have what it takes to make ISC the best workplace it can be.

I honour the courage, vulnerability, and authenticity of all the FSPs who shared their truths and contributed to this report. Your experiences are the basis for building a better, more responsive, and supportive organization. You practise your cultural humility daily. Your lived experiences on the frontline command and deserve respect.

Both ISC Deputy Minister, Gina Wilson and I are former FSPs. I want to highlight her words here as they resonate so much for me as well:

“I always publicly say, hats off to everyone who works on the frontline. Having done this work, I know how tough and challenging it is. All my jobs that followed have been so much easier, as nothing compares to the frontline.”

– **ISC Deputy Minister Gina Wilson**



Wholehearted thanks to all FSPs as you continue to represent and give meaning to the “services” part of ISC. You inspire me to be better and do better.

With my utmost respect,

Dr. Nadia Ferrara
Ombuds

The Indigenous Services Canada Ombuds office

The ISC Ombuds office was established in fall 2022 in response to a recommendation from the former Clerk's Safe Workspaces report, aiming to provide a safer space for employees to disclose work-related issues. The Ombuds office also includes the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Secretariat and the Informal Conflict Management Office. These teams help create a workplace where employees feel included. The Ombuds office aligns with the Government of Canada's commitment to employee well-being by providing safer spaces in the workplace.

The Ombuds team operates under the principles of informality, impartiality, and independence. We offer a confidential service where employees can discuss workplace concerns without fear of reprisal. The team provides advice, resources, and recommendations to address systemic issues and support employees' well-being. The approach is rooted in cultural humility, emphasizing self-reflection, empathy, and trauma-informed care. The purpose of the ISC Ombuds office is to help create an inclusive, human-centred workplace that values lived experiences and transforms truth into meaningful action.

[Learn more about the work of the ISC Ombuds office.](#)



What we heard

Over the past few months, the Ombuds office had several meetings with FSPs across various branches of ISC. These meetings aimed to acknowledge their hard work and better understand their lived realities. These conversations provided valuable insights into the experiences, challenges, and successes of those who are at the forefront of delivering our services. Through these discussions, several key themes emerged that highlight both the strengths and areas for growth within ISC. They have raised many of their concerns through various methods.

The dedication, empathy, and professionalism of FSPs to ISC's mission and their commitment to serving communities was evident in every meeting we held. They also shared the challenges and issues that impact their ability to perform their roles effectively. Common themes in the discussions included the need for:

- additional support and resources
- improved communication channels
- more adequate safety measures
- better training opportunities, and
- to feel their perspectives matter

This section seeks to capture their concerns and aspirations, while reflecting their daily realities. It's important to note that this report isn't exhaustive, as the Ombuds team was unable to meet with every service provider in the department. The feedback presented here is based on the perspectives of those who participated. The report is intended to inform and guide our efforts to enhance the support provided to our colleagues, ultimately leading to a stronger, more responsive ISC.

When considering the insights shared below, we note that FSPs in remote Indigenous communities face unique circumstances. These circumstances are rooted in a historical context of colonialism and systemic discrimination, resulting in a chronic lack of resources in critical services and infrastructure. ISC's mission is to improve access to high-quality services for Indigenous communities. FSPs are essential to this mission, as they are committed to delivering these services regularly.

■ What we heard from nurses

Nurses play a vital role in the well-being of communities, holding deep compassion and dedication for what they do. Nurses show their resilience, expertise, commitment and passion for helping others, even in challenging situations. ISC nurses consistently go above and beyond to ensure that patients receive the best possible care at all times. This section captures the voices of the ISC nursing professionals the Ombuds team met with. It highlights their experiences, concerns, and the critical role they play in maintaining the health and well-being of communities.

Resilience amid staffing challenges

In various settings, nurses have shown remarkable strength in coping with major staffing shortages and the demands put on them. We heard that many facilities don't have enough staff, especially in northern regions where the work is more independent and varied. This shortage leads to an overwhelming workload, increased stress, decreased work-life balance, and burnout among nurses. Chronic understaffing is compounded by the high turnover rate. Nurses leave ISC or take sick leave, due to the challenging working conditions and lack of work-life balance. Differences in pay between agency nurses and regular staff worsen retention problems, with many leaving for higher-paying agency roles.

Though they face retention challenges and compensation discrepancies, nurses remain dedicated to their communities. Many continue to work in remote areas where health care needs are high, even though opportunities for better pay and conditions exist elsewhere. Health care staff are unable to keep up with the growing number of patients needing urgent care. Nurses' commitment to providing care, even in under-resourced environments, speaks to their deep connection to the communities they serve. They continue to advocate for better resources and support, ensuring that health care remains accessible to all.

Commitment to safety and security

Safety concerns in remote nursing stations present significant challenges. Nurses in these areas work under unique pressures and often at great personal risk, without the immediate support of trained security personnel. They rely on local safety officers, but these officers often lack the necessary training. Security can also be complex given community dynamics, as many safety officers must navigate their own family ties and relationships to fulfill the duties of their post. We heard that nurses are vulnerable to many risks, including physical abuse from patients, break-ins, and arson. We heard that ISC's response has been unsatisfactory, with promises of improved safety measures going unfulfilled. Incident reports are stalling at higher levels, leaving nurses feeling unheard and undervalued. Nurses are strongly calling on ISC to prioritize safety and provide the necessary tools and resources to prepare incoming staff for the realities faced on the job. Nurses remain steadfast in their roles despite increasing safety concerns, and continue to adapt while remaining dedicated to their patient's health and safety.

Navigating bureaucratic barriers with determination

Nurses have shown great resilience in navigating the bureaucratic challenges that impact staffing and security. Although delays in staffing decisions and unimplemented recommendations can create obstacles, nurses continue to push forward, seeking solutions and advocating for more effective processes. Their determination to ensure their voices are heard and their work is valued reflects their strong sense of purpose in maintaining equitable quality care despite systemic challenges.

We also heard that nurses are overwhelmed with the critical need to address health care gaps in underserved communities. Nurses aren't often trained for the specialized care being asked of them, and resources for this type of care are limited. Regardless, they try hard to rise to the challenge and adapt to changing health care needs. They demonstrate their flexibility and dedication to patient outcomes. Nurses are leading efforts to advocate for more proactive health initiatives. They work tirelessly to fill critical gaps and address the long-term health of their communities.

Worsening burden of illness

We heard that many communities experience high illness burdens, which refers to the significant impact of one or more health conditions on a person's daily life as well as the community's health resources. It means the individual is dealing with serious or ongoing illnesses that require frequent medical care. These illness burdens overwhelm the available resources and capacity to provide care within affected communities. We heard that communities are experiencing delays in access to specialists, due to complex transport logistics. These delays result in an overburdened and understaffed health care system. Nurses are stretched thin, while agency nurses, although willing to help, also struggle with the unique challenges of working in the North.

Nurses highlighted that health care in these communities has shifted from being proactive to reactive. They noted that funding and resources for proactive initiatives have declined. This has left communities without enough tools to manage their health proactively, particularly in mental health services. Support is limited to occasional therapist visits and crisis services

are nearly nonexistent. Nurses are increasingly required to provide specialized support, such as mental health care, without sufficient preparation or resources, further straining their capacity.

These resource gaps have led to significant declines in community health, with a noticeable shift from preventive to emergency or reactive care. Programs like immunization initiatives and harm reduction for addictions are falling behind, constrained by budget issues and restrictions on overtime. This reactive approach to health care is worsening health outcomes in communities, as the lack of resources leads to the neglect of chronic care.

ISC nurses face significant challenges, but have shown extraordinary resilience, dedication, and compassion in their roles. Their unwavering commitment to their communities, coupled with their advocacy for better resources and support, is vital to the sustainability of health care services in remote and northern areas. While they continue to overcome many obstacles, addressing the systemic issues of staffing, compensation, and safety is crucial. Doing so will ensure these dedicated professionals can continue to thrive and serve with excellence.

What we heard from environmental public health officers

EPHOs provide a critical service that ensures the health and safety of the communities they serve. Their work goes beyond inspections; they play a vital role in building trust and making sure that public infrastructure supports healthy, safe living conditions. EPHOs advocate passionately for the well-being of communities. Their dedication is reflected in the meaningful relationships they build with community members. EPHOs often bring baby clothes, graduation gifts or snacks to the communities they serve. These gestures show their deep cultural engagement and build personal connections within the community. Through these relationships, they experience aspects of many Indigenous cultures, making their role deeply fulfilling and enriching.

Navigating travel and logistics

Travel is a significant part of the EPHO role, often taking them to remote and isolated communities. While this aspect of the job allows them to support diverse regions, it also comes with logistical challenges. These include long drives, limited flight options, and difficult terrain. Despite these obstacles, EPHOs remain committed to delivering their services efficiently. Their dedication to the people they serve is evident. Many EPHOs often go above and beyond, working overtime to meet their commitments. However, due to budget constraints, their employer doesn't always compensate them for their extra hours.

Strong team dynamics and support

We heard from several EPHO teams that they benefit from a strong sense of collaboration and support. Regular team meetings, feedback loops, and the shared experience of handling emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic have strengthened their capabilities. These supportive environments foster teamwork, allowing EPHOs to address the challenges they face in the field effectively. The resilience and adaptability of EPHOs demonstrate their capacity to manage both day-to-day operations and larger-scale emergencies with confidence and cohesion.

Streamlining administrative duties

While EPHOs are deeply invested in their fieldwork, we heard that complicated administrative tasks and processes can present a barrier and shift their focus away from their important community engagement work. Many EPHOs we met with expressed a desire to streamline administrative processes so they can spend more time in communities directly impacting public health outcomes. Even when navigating complex administrative systems, EPHOs remain dedicated to their role and continue to provide high-quality service. It was clear that their commitment to improving the communities they serve is unwavering. Their ability to balance both administrative and field duties highlights their resilience.

Support for mental well-being

The personal connections EPHOs build with community members are central to their role. In addition to inspections, they provide valuable education on topics such as disease prevention, food safety, and water quality. EPHOs are deeply motivated by the impact their work has on the communities they serve. They are passionate about ensuring safe drinking water and upgrading community infrastructure.

We heard that EPHOs sometimes encounter emotionally challenging situations. While mental health support specifically tailored to EPHOs is not yet widely available, there is a need to provide these services. Strengthening mental health support systems would further empower EPHOs to continue their essential work while maintaining their well-being.

Despite the logistical, administrative, and emotional challenges they face, EPHOs make a visible and lasting difference in the communities they serve. Their work leads to improved public health, infrastructure, and living conditions. The personal connections they build, and the passion and dedication they demonstrate continue to contribute positively to the well-being of communities. This makes their role essential and impactful.

■ What we heard from Jordan's Principle staff

Those working within Jordan's Principle embody the commitment required to provide vital frontline services to First Nations communities. Many of those we spoke with are passionate advocates for Indigenous children and they care deeply about the communities they serve. We heard that while the work can be demanding and emotionally taxing due to the nature of the cases they handle, it can also be incredibly rewarding.

Growth and expansion of Jordan's Principle

Since its inception Jordan's Principle has grown significantly, especially in Ontario. It has evolved from handling a few cases weekly to managing a high volume of requests. The increased awareness and use of Jordan's Principle show that communities recognize its importance. However, this rapid growth has created challenges, including a backlog of requests. Despite efforts to adapt, the overwhelming demand for services and limited staffing have stretched teams thin.

Jordan's Principle faces operational and staffing challenges as it adjusts to the increasing demand for its services. High turnover rates, combined with the need for frequent training of new hires, add pressure on the existing workforce. Staff need more resources and support to maintain a sustainable workload and prevent burnout. The dedication of the team is clear. With the right support, they can continue delivering the critical services that communities rely on.

Emotional labour and staff well-being

We heard that the work requires a deep emotional commitment. Staff regularly interact with individuals dealing with trauma. The responsibility of delivering both good and difficult news can be emotionally and mentally taxing. Many employees experience secondary trauma: the emotional stress that comes from hearing about others' firsthand traumatic experiences. While they remain dedicated to the cause, the emotional labour can affect their well-being. With resources stretched thin, staff have few opportunities to take leave, exposing them to the risk of burnout. We heard that staff need more tailored support for their well-being and to manage stress.

Managers and senior staff also face unique challenges, particularly around addressing performance concerns and managing the emotional impact of their roles. While there is room to strengthen mental wellness initiatives further, many teams are working to create a more supportive and compassionate environment. Staff are vocal about their desire for meaningful acknowledgment from leadership. Leaders are seeking ways to ensure the well-being of their employees while maintaining efficient operations.

Impact of the Back to Basics initiative and cultural competence

The Back to Basics initiative is designed to reconnect Jordan's Principle with its original mission. It has helped staff better understand and relate to the lived experiences of the Indigenous communities they serve. Many employees welcomed the initiative because it brought clarity and renewed focus. Externally, we heard that some partners misunderstood the changes, which created some resistance. Jordan's Principle remains committed to fostering a strong cultural competence among staff, including raising awareness of the historical and cultural contexts essential to the work.

Although their work can be intense, it was clear that the sense of advocacy for Indigenous children remains strong among Jordan's Principle team members. We heard about the importance of building and maintaining trust with Indigenous partners and staff continue to focus on bridging any gaps that may arise. The occasional verbal abuse stemming from historical grievances rooted in colonial legacies highlights the complexities of the role. Nevertheless, this abuse hasn't diminished the team's commitment to their mission. With that said, access to more resources would give staff more opportunities for training in culturally sensitive, trauma-informed service delivery.

Commitment to a positive work environment

Although they face many complexities, we heard that many teams working within Jordan's Principle are actively working to create a more caring and empathetic work culture. Engaging in the Ombuds Cultural Humility Dialogue Sessions demonstrates the team's commitment to building a workplace grounded in respect, compassion and understanding. These efforts reflect the organization's dedication to improving its environment and ensuring staff feel valued and supported in their important work.

■ What we heard from Indian Oil and Gas Canada staff

An integral branch of ISC is [Indian Oil and Gas Canada \(IOGC\)](#). IOGC manages and regulates oil and gas resources on designated First Nation lands across Canada. While IOGC staff deal with a unique set of challenges, they continue to meet their operational mandates. We met with several IOGC colleagues who work on the frontline and they raised some major themes.

Communication and accountability improvements needed

A significant number of employees have previously criticized the agency for systemic racism, discrimination, and bullying. Under new leadership, the agency is working diligently to repair trust and create a welcoming environment, free from harassment and workplace toxicity. Senior leadership has made efforts to improve communication between the executive level and IOGC employees, but there remains an opportunity to strengthen transparency and information-sharing. A previously released action plan aimed at improving workplace culture has had great progress, and teams continue to work on identified actions. There is potential to enhance accountability at the executive level and better equip managers to keep staff informed and engaged.

Enhancing access to wellness resources

We heard that there is a need to improve access to workplace wellness resources. Managers have made efforts to share mental health and wellness information, though some challenges remain in spreading these resources effectively. By addressing this, the organization can better support employees in managing workplace stress and conflict. Making wellness resources more visible and accessible will foster a healthier and more supportive environment. We can strengthen these resources by acknowledging how our colonial legacies and systemic racism historically impact mental health and wellness.

Addressing systemic challenges and supporting Indigenous employees

IOGC is committed to creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace. Although there have been historic challenges, including grievances and concerns from Indigenous employees, there are teams working to address these issues. By fostering a culture of respect and understanding, IOGC can work toward rebuilding trust and retaining valuable Indigenous staff. Ongoing efforts are needed to make sure that leaders view diversity and inclusion as key areas for growth. We learned about a best practice called Organizational Change Management (OCM) support. OCM focuses on guiding staff through organizational changes, advising the CEO and making sure staff concerns are heard. OCM support helps the organization navigate change in a way that seeks to strengthen team morale and cohesion by:

- facilitating peer support
- promoting respectful behaviour, and
- creating opportunities for social connection

Encouraging open dialogue and supporting wellness

IOGC recognizes the importance of fostering a culture where employees feel comfortable sharing their concerns. While challenges remain in this area, we heard from teams who are focused on creating a more open and supportive environment. They shared that efforts to improve mental health and wellness resources are underway, to ensure that staff feel valued and supported in their roles. By prioritizing employee well-being, IOGC aims to create a more positive and inclusive workplace for all. Programs like the Elder-in-Residence, smudging sessions and trauma-informed workshops demonstrate that IOGC is making efforts to support well-being. We also heard that Cultural Humility Dialogue Sessions with the Ombuds are helping to create a more compassionate and understanding work environment. The Ombuds will continue supporting employees at IOGC.

■ What we heard from dental care staff

ISC's dental service providers are deeply committed to the oral health and well-being of First Nations communities. Dental care staff, including dental hygienists and dental therapists, are passionate about delivering essential services that directly impact the health of their communities. These professionals, especially those working in remote communities, find their work highly rewarding, particularly when educating children about oral health and providing them with treatment. They demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility and care in maintaining the health of both children and adults. Below is what we heard when meeting with dental care staff.

Challenges in communication and support

Dental care staff highlighted the need for better communication and support from ISC leadership. They expressed concerns about the lack of regular check-ins and meaningful engagement with management. This has led to feelings of isolation and low morale. The absence of communication during critical situations, such as community lockdowns or emergencies, has also been a significant concern. Staff are eager for more consistent and open communication to ensure they feel supported and connected to their leadership.

Safety and preparedness in communities

Dental care staff identified safety in remote communities as a concern. They shared concerns about feeling unsafe when travelling in government-branded vehicles. This has led to the removal of logos for security reasons. Furthermore, the lack of training in de-escalation and situational awareness was a recurring theme. Staff expressed a desire for mandatory training to make sure they're better equipped to handle challenging situations, such as violence. These situations are reportedly increasing in some communities. Like nurses, dental staff are strongly calling on ISC to prioritize staff safety and provide the necessary tools and resources to prepare them for these realities.

Need for Indigenous representation and advocacy

Staff underscored the importance of having more Indigenous representation in managerial and leadership positions. They believe that Indigenous managers would be better advocates for frontline staff and the communities they serve, offering a deeper understanding of the cultural and situational challenges they face. Staff raised concerns about unqualified individuals without dental care experience being placed in managerial roles, while qualified Indigenous candidates were overlooked. Increasing Indigenous leadership within ISC is seen as a critical step toward more effective advocacy and support for dental care teams.

Rewarding work amid post-pandemic adjustments

We heard that dental care staff remain passionate about their work, especially in educating and treating children in the communities. They find joy in seeing the positive impact of their efforts on the oral health of young patients and the community as a whole. However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruptions and staff are still rebuilding their routines and services. Dental therapists travel to multiple communities frequently and are crucial in providing comprehensive dental care. The communities they serve deeply value this work.

Desire for professional development and well-being support

Dental care staff expressed the need for more professional development opportunities, particularly in the areas of safety and de-escalation. Online courses in these areas are seen as vital to preparing staff for their work in remote and sometimes volatile environments. Additionally, staff are calling on ISC to show greater concern for their well-being, making sure they have the necessary resources and to thrive in their roles. Staff are looking for a workplace culture that values and protects their physical and emotional health. It was clear in our meetings that dental care professionals at ISC are dedicated to improving the oral health of First Nations communities and providing compassionate and expert care. By addressing issues related to communication, safety, Indigenous representation and professional development, ISC can strengthen its support for these vital health care providers. This will also enable them to continue to positively impact the communities they serve.

Recommendations

The insights gathered from the many ISC FSPs we engaged with underscore the profound dedication and resilience of FSPs across diverse roles. Despite the challenges they face, the individuals we met with each demonstrated an unwavering commitment to their mission and the communities they serve.

Despite staffing shortages, safety concerns, and logistical and administrative challenges, each group has handled these pressures and shown a strong dedication to their work. ISC FSPs continue to be fierce partners and advocates for community members, while striving for better working conditions. These efforts lead to better outcomes for communities.

The common themes emerging from these discussions reveal a strong and urgent need for enhanced support and resources, better training, improved communication and increased Indigenous representation. This means more Indigenous managerial and executive-level staff that can advocate for the people they serve. Addressing these areas won't only relieve some pressures faced by FSPs but will also strengthen ISC's ability to deliver effective services. Throughout our discussions, it became clear that FSPs have raised many of these issues already. The following recommendations build on their feedback, as many of these issues still haven't been resolved.

These high-level recommendations aim to encourage meaningful action and address the recurring concerns of FSPs. By focusing on these themes, we hope to support leaders in initiating changes, while FSPs continue their important work. These changes will improve working conditions, boost morale and enhance employee well-being.



■ Recommendations regarding nurses

- Engage with Indigenous partners to hire more Indigenous nursing staff
- Leverage a more comprehensive approach to the onboarding process that considers and prepares nurses for the unique challenges of working in the North
 - This would ensure new nurses have appropriate expectations
- Support the creation of an employee network for nurses to share resources and increase collaboration and engagement
- Implement the initiatives and retention strategies promoted by the [Nursing Retention Toolkit](#)
 - These are designed to enhance the current working conditions of nurses, and support better patient outcomes
- Use mentorship programs to pair new hires with experienced staff to support their development
- Leverage data within the organization to monitor retention rates and identify areas needing improvement
 - Promote work-life balance and support employees in managing stress and burnout, creating a supportive and healthy work environment
- Encourage and respect nurse autonomy in setting and using vacation time
- Build on current cultural competency training within the onboarding program to help new hires understand the nuances and complexities of northern communities
- Promote, advocate and reinstate educative sessions on health promotion and healthy living
- Hold meet-and-greet sessions with nurses and communities to develop a better relationship with community members
- Remove bureaucratic roadblocks, such as contractual constraints, to streamline hiring and support the overwhelming demand for more nursing staff

Recommendations regarding environmental public health officers

- Promote work-life balance and support employees in managing stress and burnout creating a supportive and healthy work environment
- Provide access to culturally appropriate mental health and wellness resources for Indigenous employees and other equity-seeking groups ensuring that all employees have the supports they need to thrive
- Use mentorship programs to pair new hires with experienced staff to support their development
- Continue to enhance testing technology available to EPHOs to allow for accurate and safe testing
- Consider creating a centralized administrative system, similar to the support provided to nurses, to manage travel bookings
- Support a discussion forum where EPHOs from across Canada can:
 - talk about their experiences
 - discuss the challenges of working in emergency response
 - come up with and share ideas about how to improve those experiences
- Ensure that EPHOs are paid properly for overtime work

Recommendations regarding Jordan's Principle staff

- Review and revise workplace policies to ensure they support work-life balance, cultural needs, and personal development
- Encourage and strongly recommend to directors and high-level staff to filter service requests to ensure that staff can address truly urgent requests and limit backlog
- Promote work-life balance and support employees in managing high backlog, stress and burnout, creating a supportive and healthy work environment
- Develop, promote, or reinstate mentorship programs pairing new hires with more experienced staff
- Remove bureaucratic roadblocks in the onboarding process to streamline hiring and counter the overwhelming demand for more Jordan's Principle staff
- Provide mandatory training on recognizing, addressing and de-escalating harassment, abuse, and discrimination so that staff are better prepared to handle conflict when it arises

Recommendations regarding Indian Oil and Gas Canada staff

- Provide and promote mandatory training on recognizing and addressing harassment and discrimination
- Implement confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms for harassment and discrimination
- Encourage senior staff to continuously communicate and model the principles of equity, respect, and workplace wellness to address the alarming rates of discrimination and harassment
- Proactively address areas of the organization with higher rates of harassment and discrimination by holding leaders accountable
- Leverage data-driven insights, such as identifying if disciplinary action is disproportionately used, and adjust processes as needed

Recommendations Regarding dental care staff

- Encourage and promote regular touch bases with dental care staff in the field and managerial staff to ensure they feel valued and appreciated
- Promote a less siloed work environment where nurses and dental care staff can collaborate and help each other as needed
- Develop partnerships with Indigenous organizations, educational institutions, and community groups to create a diverse talent stream of potential employees
- Introduce a retention bonus administered by ISC as an incentive to continue working in dental care for the department
- Develop, promote, or reinstate mentorship programs to pair new hires with more experienced staff

