



First Nations Centre

Our Mission

- The mission of the FNC is to advance First Nations health knowledge. The FNC respects First Nations aspirations for self-determination, distinctiveness and diversity. Working with First Nations, the FNC creates, promotes and shares health information and research. The FNC develops tools and processes that assist in building capacity and transferring knowledge.

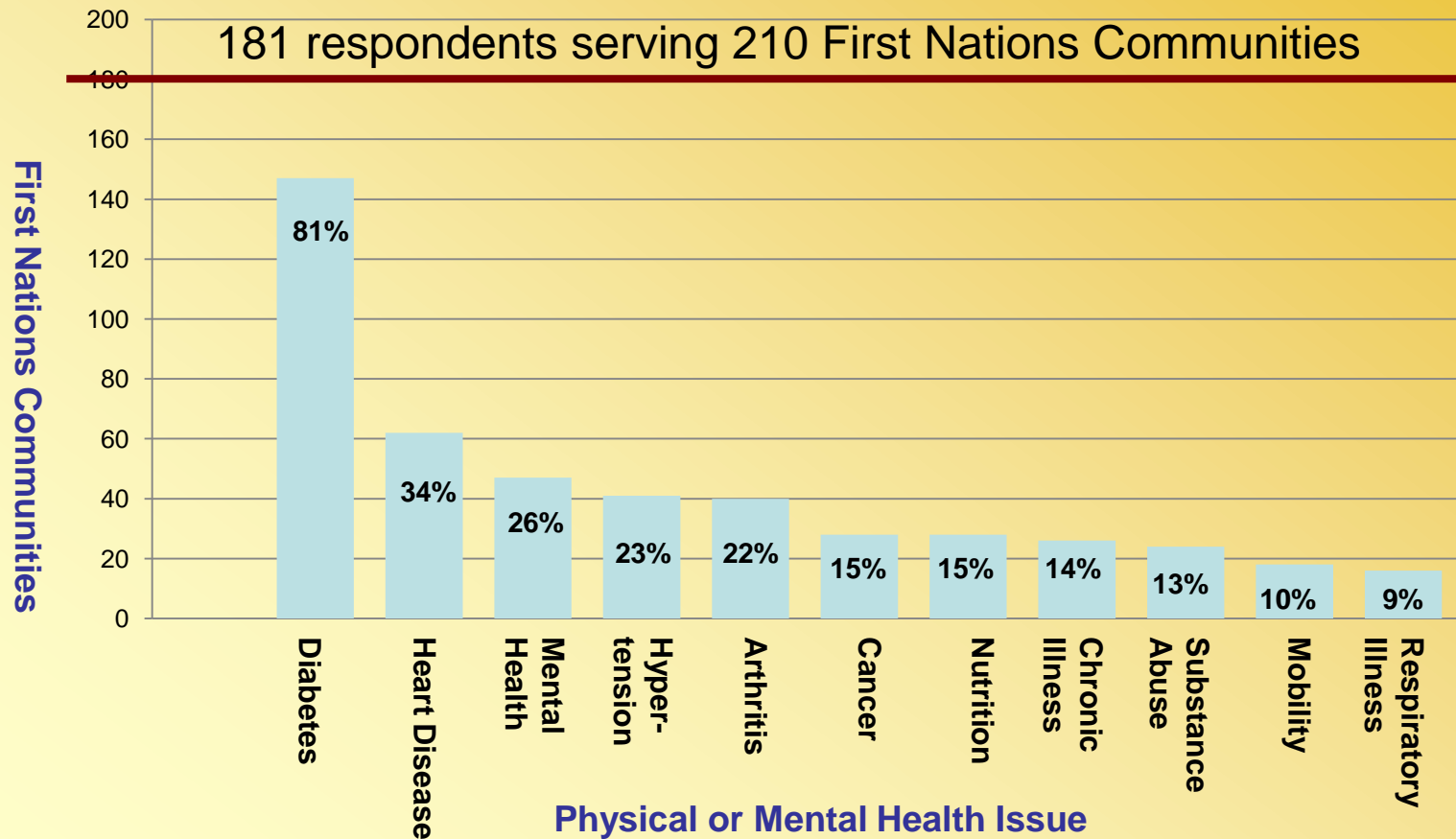


Historical Context in Reviewing First Nations Health

- * Colonization
- * Residential School Experience
- * Environmental Destruction
- * Social Indicators

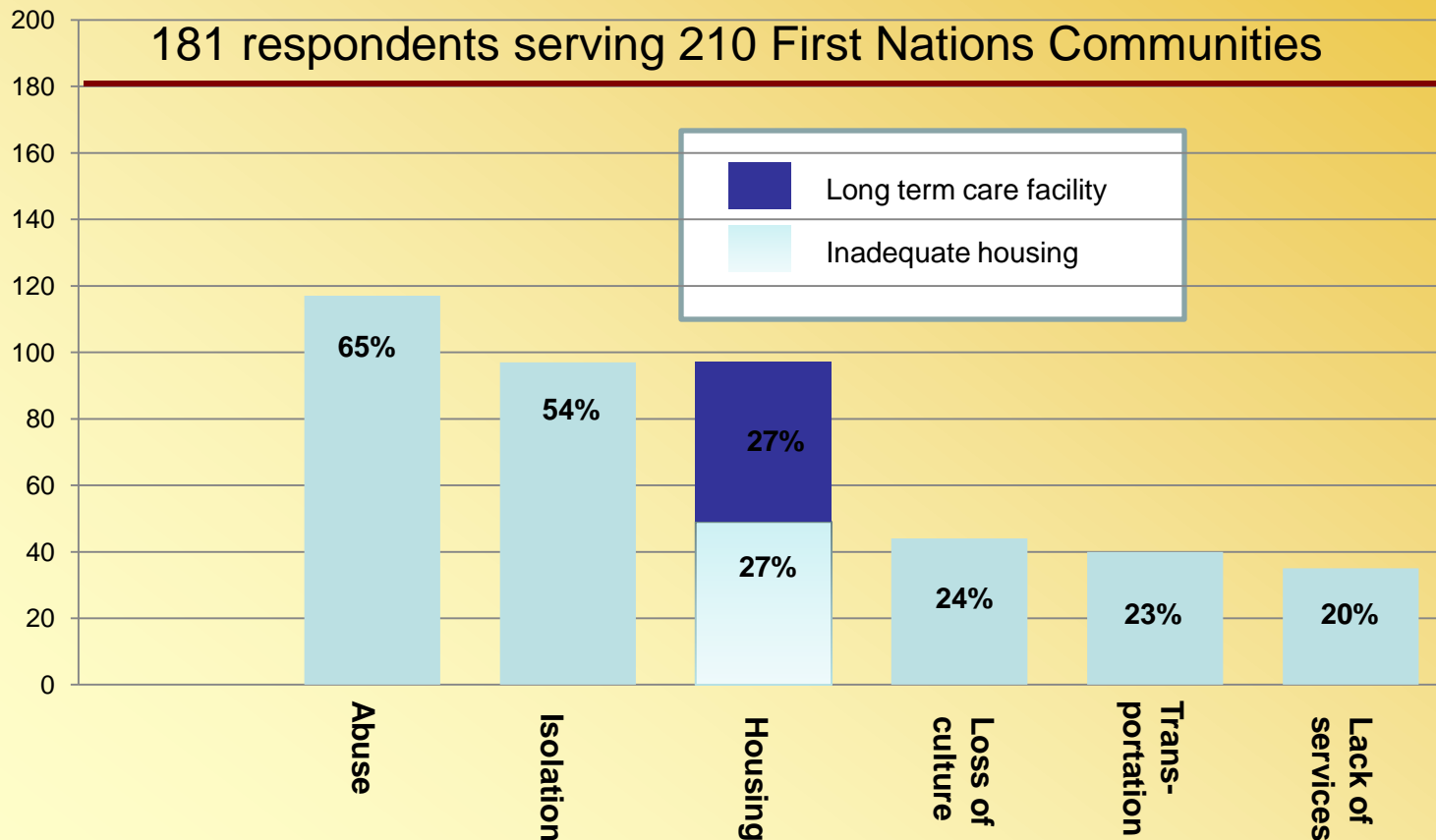


Reported Physical Health and Mental Health Issues Among Seniors in First Nations Communities





Reported Social, Emotional and Spiritual Issues Among Seniors in First Nations Communities





Contributions of Seniors in First Nations Communities Health

Respondents reported that:

- Seniors/Elders help the community by providing teachings and passing on culture, history, language, and knowledge to next generations
- Elders are appreciated for their cultural understanding and are needed for their knowledge and their guidance
- Elders are called on for ceremonies and events
- Elders provide information on traditional medicine, traditional lands and plants
- Seniors are involved in all health planning and consultation and sit on many committees in the community



Services for Seniors Provided in First Nations Communities

- **Residential** (assisted living unit, personal care home, nursing home)
- **Community** (women's and elders groups, day programs)
- **Medical-Physical** (foot care, home care)
- **Mental Health** (addictions counselling, healing circles)
- **Health Promotion and Wellness** (wellness clinics, fitness programs)
- **Home Support** (meals on wheels, home making)
- **Traditional** (berry picking, pow wow)
- **Transportation** (medical transportation, escort)
- **Communications** (translation for home care and for appointments)
- **Social** (sharing circle, day trips, elders gatherings)



Programs and Services for Seniors Needed in First Nations Communities

- With more funding or specific funding for seniors health, more programs could be developed and implemented.
- Almost 34% of respondents said that more social programs are needed for seniors.
- About 20% of respondents said that improved or expanded existing programs are needed.
- 8% said that a meals on wheels program is needed in the community



Programs and Services for Seniors Needed in First Nations Communities

- **Specialized health care providers** (i.e. physiotherapists, dieticians, dental hygienists, podiatrists, psychologists, and personal care aides) - **14%**
- More **programs for mental health** -**10%**
- Better **access to assistive devices**, such as walkers and wheelchairs, or that housing and transportation needs to be adapted to accommodate these types of devices - **5%**
- No new programs are needed or programs already available need to be better utilized by the seniors - **5%**



Senior Abuse in First Nations Communities

- Senior abuse was reported by about 65% of health care providers.
- Only 6% of respondents reported having programs to address seniors abuse.
- The most common form of senior abuse was **financial abuse**, often by children and grandchildren with substance abuse issues.
- The abuse of seniors for prescription medications was reported by 4% of respondents.



Senior Abuse in First Nations Communities Cont.

- In our scan, as in a 2008 survey by Human Resources and Social Development Canada, financial abuse was reported as the most common type of senior abuse.
- The public perception of senior abuse is not consistent with reports by health care providers.
- Raising awareness among seniors about their right to live safely and securely, as well as the public to change perceptions are necessary steps in order to address this issue.



Adequate and Suitable Housing in First Nations Communities

- Substandard or overcrowding housing, along with the need for long term care facilities, was the third most reported health concern by health care providers in our survey.
- On-reserve First Nations households experience more overcrowding (five times greater) and worse states of repair (ten times greater) than homes in the rest of Canada.
- Appropriate housing for seniors is needed because if seniors have to leave the community to be placed in a nursing home they suffer from loneliness, isolation, despair, language barriers, cultural insensitivity, and seem to deteriorate faster.

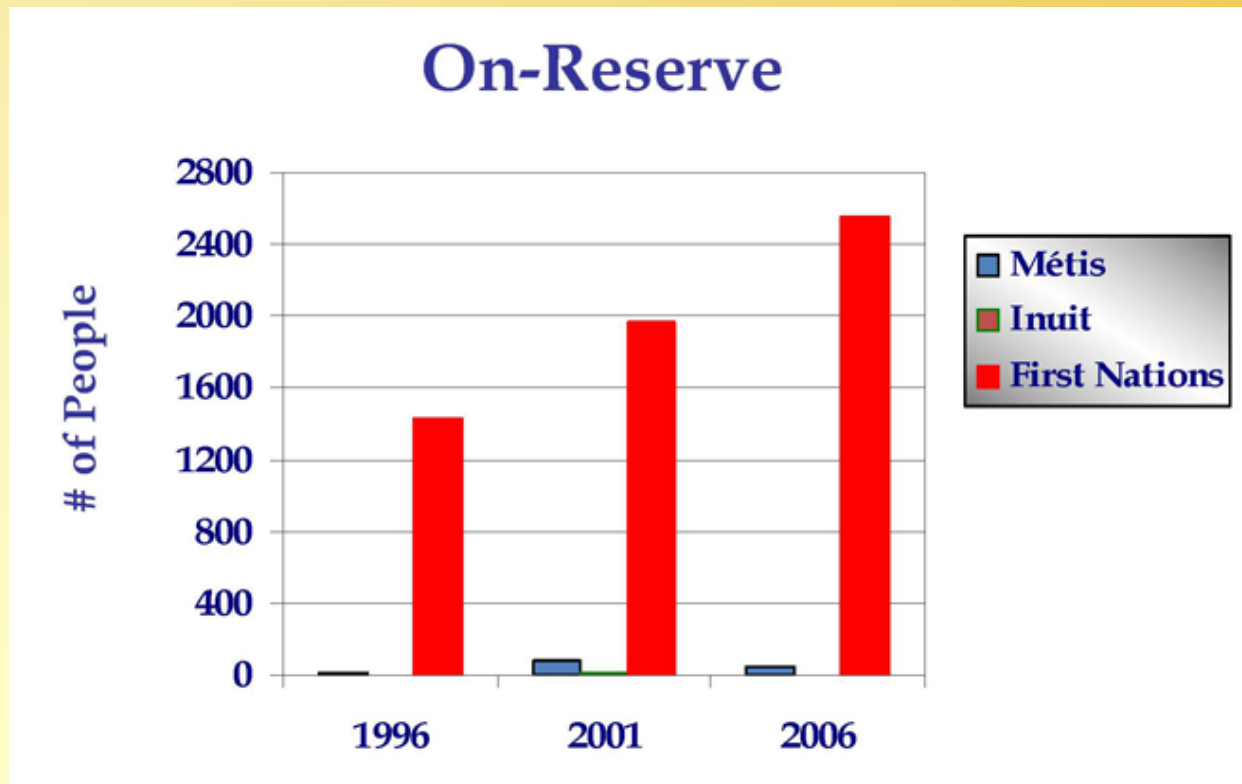


Long Term Care Facilities in First Nations Communities

- Respondents stated that having a long term care facility in the community would:
 - Be better for the mental and emotional health of seniors
 - Make it easier for family members to visit
 - Allow seniors to retain their cultural practices
 - Provide space for social activities and day programs
 - Increase the efficiency of health care workers (requires less travel time for the workers giving them more time to provide care)
 - Allow for some services to be provided outside of business hours
- Respondents said that this type of residence could help alleviate some the housing issues on reserve, reducing overcrowding.



Delivery of Health Care in First Nations Communities





Indigenous Seniors Health in the International Context

- The Indigenous populations in Australia and the United States are also trying to address the trauma that is part of the history of forced removal of children.
- As the former students age into their senior years, healing at the individual, family and community level takes on new considerations.
- Seniors (Elders) continue their traditional roles in Indigenous societies, live according to the teachings, while often dealing with unresolved issues due to traumatic experiences and in isolation without access to appropriate resources.



Conclusions

- There is a need for raising public awareness in First Nations communities about financial abuse of seniors and the abuse of seniors for the prescription drugs.
- Adequate and suitable housing for seniors in First Nations communities is key to addressing many health issues affecting seniors.



Next Steps

- Established a Senior's Advisory Committee
- Will use report to inform development of senior's health strategy and future FNC projects