



**Chiefs of Ontario Annual Report 2019-20**  
**Keeping the Circle Strong**





### **Artwork Acknowledgement**

*Thirteen Grandmother*

*All over the world, cultures and communities have mapped the moon cycle, which happens 13 times per year in cycles of 28 days. As the Woman gives life to the next generations, the Tree is central to that cycle; it gives breath to each of those children to which the Women bear.*

*What is also quite significant, is that the stories of the Moons the Teachings reflect each culture differently; depending on the location of the people on Mother Earth.*

*The Cree will have their stories, just as the Anishnawbe, the Haudenosaunee, and so forth.*

*Each one is connected to the Moon, the Tree, and the Cycle of Life.*

*Betty Albert*

*(Wabimguil Copyright, 2020)*

# Contents

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Report from the Ontario Regional Chief.....	4
Leadership Council Report.....	10
Report from the Chief Operating Officer .....	12
Board of Directors Report .....	14
Chiefs of Ontario Restructuring Committee Report .....	16
Resolutions Review .....	18
Financial Overview .....	19
Human Resources Report.....	20
Education Sector .....	22
Environment Sector.....	25
Health Sector .....	30
Social Services Sector .....	38
Communications & Federal Affairs Sector .....	42
Policy & Provincial Affairs Sector .....	45
All Ontario Chiefs Conference 2019.....	47
Staff of the Chiefs of Ontario .....	49
Map of the First Nations in Ontario .....	50



## Report from the Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald

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### Wahcheeyay, Aanii, Boozhoo, She:kon, Shekoli,

It is my pleasure to present my 2019/2020 annual report as Ontario Regional Chief.

The start of 2020 has certainly been memorable and will go down in history as a world-altering year where we, as Peoples of Mother Earth, are in the process of creating a new reality where we can all live in peace and safety.

Over my term as Regional Chief, I have focused on leading with a heart-centred approach and creating space for our First Nations to advance our priorities. This has become more important than ever.

As we move forward in this unprecedented and uncertain time, I'll continue to create more space and more opportunities for meaningful dialogue and concrete action. I believe I have done this and will continue to do so.

My work in the past year has focused on: federal and provincial government engagement, balancing my regional work with my AFN portfolio responsibilities, re-establishing healthy boundaries between my office and the COO Secretariat and most recently, responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Extraordinary situations like these test our collective will but can also bring out the best in humanity. With the unpredictable and unclear situation around COVID-19, our communities are navigating through a dangerous time with few precedents, in a world where we need unity like never before.

I am proud to say that we are moving through this cooperatively, while respecting each other's decisions and will ultimately persevere, keeping our circle stronger than ever.

### COVID-19 Global Pandemic

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When the COVID-19 Pandemic was declared on March 11, 2020, it forever changed our world. First Nation leaders in Ontario have been at the forefront, adjusting quickly to fluid situations, while doing our part to keep First Nation citizens safe from harm through the development of timely information, tools and resources for First Nations.

The work in my office continues to be guided by the higher purpose of preserving and protecting the health, well-being and lives of First Nation citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some communities are impacted more severely than others and I ask you to continue sending your prayers to all communities. Together we are working towards solutions that will support the specific needs of our communities and citizens.

My office holds several weekly meetings with Chiefs and leadership, provincial and federal authorities, cabinet ministers, health care professionals and technicians. We have created a dedicated website highlighting the meetings, links to support services and daily updates on news and announcements regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the situation continues to rapidly evolve around the globe, as do the guidelines coming from public health agencies and directives, it is important to be mindful that in a pandemic, things are always changing and evolving. The future may be uncertain but we will continue to move forward together.

Lockdowns, checkpoints and curfews have been instrumental in keeping First Nation infection rates low. We are doing our best and I want to reiterate my support for the state of emergency declaration, and the motion passed by the AFN executive calling for increased resources and support for First Nations and that funding is provided on a “needs and equity basis.”

## The Path Ahead

At the time this report was written, my office, along with the First Nations in Ontario, has begun the process of transitioning back to business as usual. With that said, I am returning to the work that was presented at the Special Chiefs Assembly in February 2020. This includes:

### A Strategic Approach to Government Relations

In the fall of 2019, First Nation leadership participated in two strategy sessions. Two documents, *Towards a New Relationship* and *Standing Together* were produced. These two documents included First Nations priorities at the federal and provincial levels, respectively. My office will follow this strategic approach that respects the nation-to-nation relationship, where First Nations can work in a cooperative and collaborative environment with the federal and provincial governments to implement individual and shared priorities.

In the past year, I’ve worked at strengthening my positive relations with both levels of government.

In October 2019, the Leadership Council had its first formal meeting with Premier Doug Ford. This resulted in my invitation to the Council of Federations reception in December 2019.

Over the year, I’ve had several calls and meetings with Ontario Cabinet members, including Minister Greg Rickford, Minister Rod Phillips, Minister Vic Fideli, Minister John Yakabuski, Attorney General Doug Downey and Minister Christine Elliott. This relationship-building has resulted in strong ties with the province during the COVID-19 pandemic. I continue to stay in regular contact with Premier Ford. I also maintain good relations with key public servants such as Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO) Deputy Minister Shawn Batise and Deputy Solicitor General Deborah Richardson.

On the federal side, I had my first one-on-one call with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during the Wet’suwet’en and Tyendinaga crises and also, along with fellow AFN Executive members, spoke with Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I have also been in regular contact with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Minister Marc Miller and his predecessor Seamus O’Regan. I’ve also had interactions and meetings with several federal ministers over the past year, including Minister Carolyn Bennett, Minister Catherine McKenna, Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister Bill Blair and Attorney General David Lametti. I also have positive relations with key federal public servants, particularly ISC Ontario Regional Director General Anne Scotton.

My aim in building relationships is to advocate for individual and collective First Nations needs and to ensure that First Nations are connected with government officials as required.

### Economic Rebuilding

First Nations will play an important role as the Ontario government proceeds in rebuilding and strengthening the economy. Economic development is not only about growing local economies but also about growing in a manner that also benefits greater partnerships.



Premier Doug Ford, National Chief Perry Bellegarde and Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald.

To accomplish this goal, my office is revamping an existing proposal that will be submitted to the Ontario government. The purpose of the proposal is to bring First Nations, government, and industry together to create strategic investments, create opportunities for long-term social transformation, as well as improved education and housing for First Nations.

### **Revitalizing Traditional Trade/Commerce Between First Nations**

First Nation trade routes and agreements existed between Nations before the arrival of settlers. The relationships and systems established many generations ago provided the foundation for a successful economy for First Nations communities.

As we move towards a post-COVID world, First Nations have the opportunity to reimagine or reignite economic systems. This revitalization that may ensure each First Nation in Ontario has their basic needs met, that each community has food sovereignty and food security and has air and accessible markets to ensure their skills and knowledge can be used to support and sustain their community.

My office is producing a concept paper on this issue which was raised by the Chiefs during this pandemic and it will be provided to the Leadership Council and First Nations leaders to consider as we proceed along this path together.

### **Celebrating Success in Ontario**

Many successes are happening across our communities but due to COVID-19 it is difficult to celebrate in person with them, however here are a few that I want to acknowledge:

Grassy Narrows First Nation moved closer to its goal of building a care home on reserve for those sickened by industrial mercury poisoning after the federal government signed an agreement to cover the entire projected cost of construction. The agreement, reached in April 2020 between Minister Marc Miller and Chief Rudy Turtle, commits Ottawa to spend \$19.5 million to build the home.

Construction was completed in October 2019 on the Henvey Inlet First Nation wind project. This landmark project is the largest single-phase wind facility and the largest on-reserve wind installation in Canada.

Beausoleil First Nation is set to benefit from a combined \$16.5 million in federal and provincial grants that will help fund wharf renovations, a new ferry and will help pave the island's dirt roads.

Nicole Ineese-Nash, a youth from Constance Lake First Nation, is the director of Finding our Power Together, which works with youth in three remote First Nations in northwestern Ontario to promote leadership and development and hopes that they can maintain some outreach during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Director Ineese-Nash says they work with many youths from Nibinamik First Nation,



*Kashechewan First Nation Rally at Queen's Park, April.*

Eabamatoong and Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug. Ineese-Nash said the concern is the youth who live in remote communities and have to physical distance from their friends, may find their lives become even more isolated. Nicole Ineese-Nash is an outstanding example of youth empowerment in action.

## AFN Portfolios

### Education

This past spring, I stepped back from the AFN Education portfolio so that I could focus my energies and work on matters within the Ontario Region. Before that, I was responsible for K-12 issues nationally and co-chaired the AFN Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) with Regional Chief Bobby Cameron.

The AFN Education Sector held two successful K-12 Education Transformation Forums in May and October 2019. The forums provided platforms for sharing information, exchanging best practices

and highlighting regional experiences in education transformation. In August 2019, the Education Partnership Program (EPP) made recommendations for minor and major changes to the program and are working towards regionalizing the program dollars.

### AFN Women's Council (AFNWC)

I am blessed to work with an amazing group of women nationally, the AFNWC, who have made the National Inquiry into MMIWG a focus and priority in their work. Sadly, Chief Celia Echum, Ontario's representative on the AFNWC passed away suddenly in April. The AFNWC, in a beautiful gesture, planted trees in her honour. Our current representative, who is also a strong leader, former Nishnawbe Aski Nation Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, now represents Ontario on the AFNWC. I look forward to continuing our important work together, including:

- Planning to hold a gathering of First Nation Women and Chiefs Leadership summit mandated by Chiefs Resolution 6/16



Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald with NDP leader Jagmeet Singh.

- Work is being done to establish an all Indigenous Women Advisory Committee to the Premier and Provincial Government
- Work is being done to establish an Indigenous Women's Shelter for women seeking shelter to escape Human Trafficking in the Greater Toronto Area

### AFN Management Committee

This committee's main function is as an interim review step before the AFN Executive Committee passes motions on management and administrative matters. Meetings are usually every other month or as required. I'm proud to serve on this committee with four other Regional Chiefs: RC Roger Augustine, RC Kluane Adamek, RC Marlene Poitras and RC Bobby Cameron.

### AFN Water Committee

I am the Water Lead and work closely with Regional Chief Kevin Hart who leads the Housing and Infrastructure portfolio. Ontario leadership has been participating in the AFN's Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure

(CCOHI) meetings, including attending the AFN's housing forum in Toronto in March 2020. The AFN CCOHI guides both our work.

In 2019-2020 the focus of the AFN Water Unit has been on continuing the co-development process for the repeal and replacement of the *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act* (SDWFNA) and the Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy. After several engagements, the AFN Water Unit presented a preliminary list of concepts to be included as part of the Long-Term Strategy, and further refined those concepts at the 3rd Annual National Water Symposium and Tradeshow in November 2019.

At the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly, the Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution 78/19: Endorsement of the Preliminary Table of Contents for a First Nations Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post-2021. The AFN Water Unit continues to refine a co-development process with Indigenous Services Canada. I continue to support and encourage Autumn Peltier's important work as the Anishinabek Chief Water Commissioner. Autumn shared her strong beliefs on the environment and water on a panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in January 2020. While on the stage in Davos she heaped more pressure on politicians in Canada to provide clean water for First Nations.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to acknowledge the strength and resiliency of the Leadership, Chiefs and Councils across our region. With a unified approach, we will make our circle stronger.

It is my great honour to serve with you during this historic time.

Wishing you peace beyond all understanding,  
Ninankamon!

RoseAnne Archibald  
Ontario Regional Chief

## Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council (OFNYPC): Tobacco and Cannabis Strategy



Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald with OFNYPC Representatives.

The Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council (OFNYPC) gathered in March 2020 to discuss, analyse and plan a Tobacco and Cannabis Strategy based on a resolution that was passed unanimously by the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

The strategy is being created collaboratively with community health workers, leadership and the youth council to create discussion, options, and find solutions on how to address cannabis, tobacco and vaping issues.

The toolkit is being led by the OFNYPC and will facilitate discussion for the creation of smoke-free spaces in First Nation communities and is scheduled to be complete by July 2020.



From left: Chief Tim “Dooley” Thompson, Chief Brian Perrault, Councillor Cam Goodman, OFNYPC Representative Lance Copegog, Minister of Crown–Indigenous Relations since Carolyn Bennett, DGC Derek Fox, Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald, GC Jonathon Solomon, Minister of Indigenous Services Marc Miller, SE DGC James Marsden, Nathan Wright, GC Glen Hare, GC Abram Benedict.



*Members of the Leadership Council of the Chiefs of Ontario met with Premier Doug Ford and Minister of Indigenous Affairs Ontario, Greg Rickford in October, 2019.*

## Leadership Council Report

**The Leadership Council (LC)**, formally known as the Political Confederacy (PC), is the political coordination and steering committee for First Nations in Ontario. Mandated by the Chiefs-in-Assembly, the LC works with the Ontario Regional Chief to set, coordinate, and implement First Nations leaders' priorities. The LC and Regional Chief are also mandated to address unforeseen and emergency issues between Assemblies.

The Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the four Political Territorial Organizations (PTOs): Anishinabek Nation, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Grand Council Treaty #3, the Independent First Nations, Six Nations of the Grand River, and the Mohawks of Akwesasne.

To complete their important work, the Council uses a portfolio system to delegate broad responsibilities in sector areas such as health, education, environment and social services. Members of the Leadership Council take responsibility for a select portfolio, ensuring that each sector has a dedicated champion, an advocate and a strong leader.

The Leadership Council relies on the work of the COO Secretariat and works closely with Sector Directors to ensure that the Council has the most up-to-date analysis and information. This relationship between the Leadership Council and Sector Directors allows the Council to focus on good governance and navigate the organization and First Nations leadership through the political landscape.

The Leadership Council plays a vital role in the Chiefs of Ontario and provides an incalculable source of strength, wisdom and leadership. Through their dedication, the Leadership Council will continue to provide guidance to First Nations in Ontario with great minds, hearts and Spirit.

During the year of 2019, the Chiefs of Ontario and Leadership Council said goodbye to long-standing LC member Ava Hill, former Chief of Six Nations of the Grand River. After six years as Chief of the largest First Nations community in Canada, Ava's legacy, of being a strong and active voice within the political realm, advocating and raising awareness regarding First Nations issues, will continue for generations. On behalf of the Chiefs of Ontario, we wish Ava Hill all the best.

# Leadership Council Members

## Members, Organizations and Contact Information



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## Report of the Chief Operating Officer Tracy Antone

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### Shekoli,

On behalf of the Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat, I would like to introduce the digital version of our 2020 Annual Report. With our All Ontario Chiefs Conference (AOCC) postponed until fall 2020, we wanted to produce the Annual Report for leadership to look back on the accomplishments and work of the secretariat over the last year and to prepare for the year ahead. The theme of the report is *Keeping the Circle Strong*. During this time we can simultaneously look back and forward, viewing our traditions and communities as sources of health, well-being and renewal.

For those who may not know me, I am Tracy Antone, from Onoyota' :ka (Oneida Nation) and by the appointment of the Board of the Directors, I assumed the role of Chief Operating Officer in November 2018. My time as the Chief Operating Officer has been very motivating and as a secretariat, we have been able to close the circle and realize a better path for communication and gathering input from the leadership so that we may better support First Nations in Ontario.

This past year we have experienced many changes, challenges and great successes as the Secretariat transitioned to a new Board of Directors in December 2019. The previous Board agreed that member organizations (PTOs) are to appoint representatives to the Board of Directors. The new Board will oversee corporate management

while the Leadership Council will continue to be the Political arm of the organization under the leadership of Regional Chief Archibald.

As we continue to manage the corporate side of the organization, the secretariat functions with updated bylaws, policies for Human Resources and Finance. The Board continues to provide the corporate leadership to move the Secretariat to sound financial management processes.

The Board gave a clear mandate to proceed with the recommendations from the HR investigation. I am pleased to report that we have finalized all of the recommendations. The primary recommendation to strengthen our policy regarding harassment has been completed and the Board, sector Directors and staff have been trained in the new policy. We will also introduce a code of conduct for meetings hosted by the secretariat. This will be addressed in the restructuring work.

Other administrative measures that have been implemented are the review and cataloguing of all Ontario resolutions and bringing forward recommendations to retire. We are finalizing this document and will advance a presentation to the leadership in the fall of 2020.

I would be remiss if I didn't address the work of the secretariat during the COVID-19 response. The secretariat has been following all emergency measures and takes the health of all employees very seriously. We work to strengthen the circle

through attention to the needs of our employees and the First Nations we work to support. Consequently, the COO secretariat office in Toronto has been closed and the secretariat staff are working from home while we continue to respond to developing issues and the needs of the leadership. I am very proud of the Communications staff and how they have pulled together our COVID-19 webpage to ensure that leadership and First Nations in Ontario are receiving credible and timely communication.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has strengthened our relationship with government, broadening and galvanizing the circle by developing our collective unity in these unprecedented times. The Secretariat will continue to grow and maintain our relationships for solutions-driven processes.

Despite the challenges we have faced this past year, I would like to acknowledge the steadfast dedication of the Directors, Policy Analysts, Coordinators and the rest of the COO Team for

their commitment, hard work and diligence in strengthening our circle by advancing First Nation issues and the Leadership Council mandates. I also wish to thank the Board of Directors, for their continuing support, guidance and direction.

Yaw^ko



Tracy Y Antone, Chief Operating Officer



*Chiefs of Ontario Staff at the All Ontario Chiefs Conference (AOCC) in June, 2019.*



*Travis Boissoneau, Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald, Geoff Stonefish, Tracy Antone, Gary Allen, and Gary Dokis, December 2019.*

## Board of Directors Report

The Board of Directors is pleased to present a report for the Chiefs of Ontario 2019/2020 annual report.

Under the new bylaws approved in June 2019, we have completed the Board of Directors' implementation. Each PTO has appointed a representative for the Board. The Board members include:

- Anishinabek Nation – Gary Dokis
- Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians – Geoff Stonefish
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation – Travis Boissoneau
- Grand Council Treaty 3 – Gary Allen

The newly appointed Board of Directors convened their first meeting in December 2019. At that time the Board was briefed on the operations of

the organization – which have been stabilized – and the recommendations made by the previous Board of Directors in July 2018, which have also been enacted and are in the final stages of implementation. A quarterly Board of Directors' meeting schedule has been established.

The recommendations of the investigation prepared by GoldBlatt were finalized. Staffing remains stable and funding for all positions is secure. The recommendation of an enhanced harassment policy was completed. Training on the new policy began with the secretariat directors in November 2019, and the Board received training at their first meeting. In January the remaining staff received training.

The financial review recommended that the Charter clearly outline roles and responsibilities, the delegation of authority, the orientation of Board of Directors members, the formal review process for organizational policies and procedures and also to detail the frequency of meetings and reports. Also included in the recommendations for the Charter is to include methods of communicating organizational processes such as budgeting processes, including review, approval and reporting,

as well as the frequency of meetings and reports. The Board has granted the Chief Operating Officer the authority to maintain processes to ensure good governance of the organization.

There was an audit management letter and a review from Ernst & Young, who was deployed by Indigenous Services Canada. The management letter identified issues with the meetings of the Board of Directors, financial processes, employment contracts, and assets such as laptops. These issues have been resolved and it is the expectation that the Chief Operating Officer will maintain the processes to keep the governance of the organization in good standing.

A review of the current structure and resources for the funding approved was completed by the Auditors of MNP. This resulted in recommendations to improve the efficacy and accountability of the financial processes of the secretariat. The Board will review and make the necessary changes, in-line with budget requirements, as required.

For the fiscal year 2019-2020 all Transfer Payments & Contribution Agreements have been confirmed. Directors' funding proposals for the existing sectors are complete. We continue to follow up on resources for a Justice Sector with funding proposals submitted.

The secretariat's staffing has been maintained with all positions having a specific cost centre. The Office of the Ontario Regional Chief is fully staffed. This has resulted in an improved response time to leadership and government.

Further evaluations will begin in January 2021, to be concluded in February 2021. New positions will only be approved once a cost center has been established and the hiring process is implemented.

The Personnel Policy has undergone a second update, reflecting current administrative practices. As per the policy, a review and update will be done yearly or as required by legal counsel. The staff has received an updated policy.

A Salary Grid has been developed and approved by the Board. The Salary Grid is now complete for use as a working document. The Salary Grid provides the base for the development of proposals and business cases for the upcoming fiscal year.

We will continue to monitor the work of the restructuring committee and the development of the draft documents that will guide the restructuring process and inform changes for leadership review.

The Board representatives have had regular calls since December 2019 to monitor the oversight of operations within the Secretariat to ensure that the administration and corporate governance of the organization is maintained. The Board is currently implementing a formalized schedule related to work plans, budgets, audits and financial management.

A final note, during the COVID-19 emergency, the Chief Operating Officer has held Board conference calls every two weeks to give guidance on the recommendations to ensure the health and safety of the employees. The financial health of the organization continues to be monitored with the audit going forward and the approval of work plans and budgets for each sector.

The Chiefs of Ontario leadership can be confident that the organization is operating effectively and the separation of corporation and politics will serve the leadership well.

# Chiefs of Ontario Restructuring Committee Report

**In November 2018**, the Chiefs-in-Assembly passed a resolution creating a Technical Committee on Restructuring comprised of technical representatives from the four Provincial Territorial Organizations, the Independent First Nations and Six Nations. The technical committee was tasked with reviewing and developing options for implementing the recommendations contained in previous Chiefs of Ontario restructuring reports for consideration by the Chiefs-in-Assembly at the April 2019 Special Chiefs Assembly (SCA). A Chiefs Oversight Committee on Restructuring was also established to provide advice and guidance to the Technical Committee in the development of options.

The Technical Committee jointly presented an options paper for the Chiefs-in-Assembly to consider during the April 2019 SCA. Two priority areas of focus with a total of ten options for moving forward were presented. The two priority areas included the need to clarify, update and finalize the Chiefs of Ontario constituting documents and work required in relation to traditional protocols.

During the April 2019 SCA, the Chiefs passed a resolution mandating the technical committee to develop a plan to implement the recommended options and to provide a status report at the June 2019 All Ontario Chiefs Conference (AOCC).

The Technical Committee, along with the Chiefs Oversight Committee, worked collaboratively to develop a status report, which was presented to the Chiefs during AOCC 2019. This status report provided the Chiefs with an overview of how the work to implement the options was proceeding.

Over the fall of 2019 and the winter of 2020, the Technical Committee has continued to meet. At the February 2020 SCA, the Technical Committee jointly with the Chiefs Oversight Committee, made a presentation to the Chiefs-in-Assembly to provide an update on the status of the restructuring work. It was reported that the following has been completed to date:

- The COO by-laws have been updated and finalized
- The COO Board of Directors has been appointed and have commenced meeting
- The Leadership Council (formerly the Political Confederacy) developed and approved their Terms of Reference, which was presented for the approval of the Chiefs-in-Assembly at the February 2020 SCA

The Chiefs-in-Assembly approved the Leadership Council Terms of Reference as presented, with the understanding that it may be necessary to make further changes in the future. It was also noted that the Leadership Council Terms of Reference includes a clause that requires they be reviewed and updated following every election of the Ontario Regional Chief (every three years).

The Technical Committee also reported that work continues on the following documents:

- The Rules of Procedures for COO Assemblies has been updated and will not be finalized until the completion of the Code of Conduct document (which is to be appended to the Rules of Procedures)
- The Ontario Regional Chief Oath of Office
- The COO Charter

The Technical Committee also noted that work continues on drafting a template Terms of Reference for all COO Committees and Working Groups, in order that there is uniformity and consistency among them. At this time many different formats are used that can cause confusion regarding mandates, roles and responsibilities, etc. Further work is also required on the matter of traditional protocols, territorial protocols and formalizing the role of Elders.

The revised Rules of Procedures, Code of Conduct, Ontario Regional Chief Oath of Office and COO Charter will undergo legal review prior to distribution to the Chiefs-in-Assembly. It is anticipated that drafts of these documents will be shared with First Nation leadership in advance of a Chiefs' assembly to ensure that there is sufficient time to review the documents prior to meeting.

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# Resolutions Review

## Aim of the Review

A **comprehensive review** of all Chiefs of Ontario Resolutions was conducted from November 2019 to May 2020. The reason for the review was to identify resolutions that are no longer active so that they can be retired by the Chiefs-in-Assembly. This was the first such review since the establishment of the Indian Associations Coordinating Committee (Chiefs of Ontario) in 1975.

Resolutions set out the direction and mandate of the Chiefs-in-Assembly regarding issues and follow-up actions to be taken. Resolutions can address any policy sector, including the priority areas, economic and sustainable community development, education, environment, health, justice, social and youth sectors in our communities.

## Results of the Review

A total of 2,581 resolutions were reviewed to see whether the mandated activity had been completed, or whether any further follow-up was required. Efforts were made to locate reports, documents and briefing notes that provided updates on resolution follow-up activity.

The review coincided with preparations for and follow-up to the February 2020 Special Chiefs Assembly (SCA) and the closure of the Chiefs of Ontario office due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Staff at the Chiefs of Ontario secretariat are commended for their assistance in accessing resolutions and briefing materials despite these challenges.

Out of 2,581 resolutions, 2,507 – almost all — were found to be inactive. Over seventy percent of these resolutions were identified as time-sensitive as follow-up tasks had been completed within a stated timeframe or no further activity was mandated in subsequent resolutions.

About fifteen percent of resolutions were duplicate copies that had been filed in more than one of the fifty-two sections of the Resolutions Binders. This indicates the cross-cutting nature

and complexity of many of the issues, which can fall under more than one policy sector.

Almost 200 resolutions had been tabled, withdrawn, defeated or rescinded by the Chiefs-in-Assembly over the 45 years covered in the review. Some resolutions were also found to have been updated in subsequent resolutions.

## Next Steps

As a next step in the review process, the findings and recommendations will be shared with First Nations leadership in Ontario for their decision. Formally retiring inactive resolutions will facilitate the streamlining of work plans and reporting.

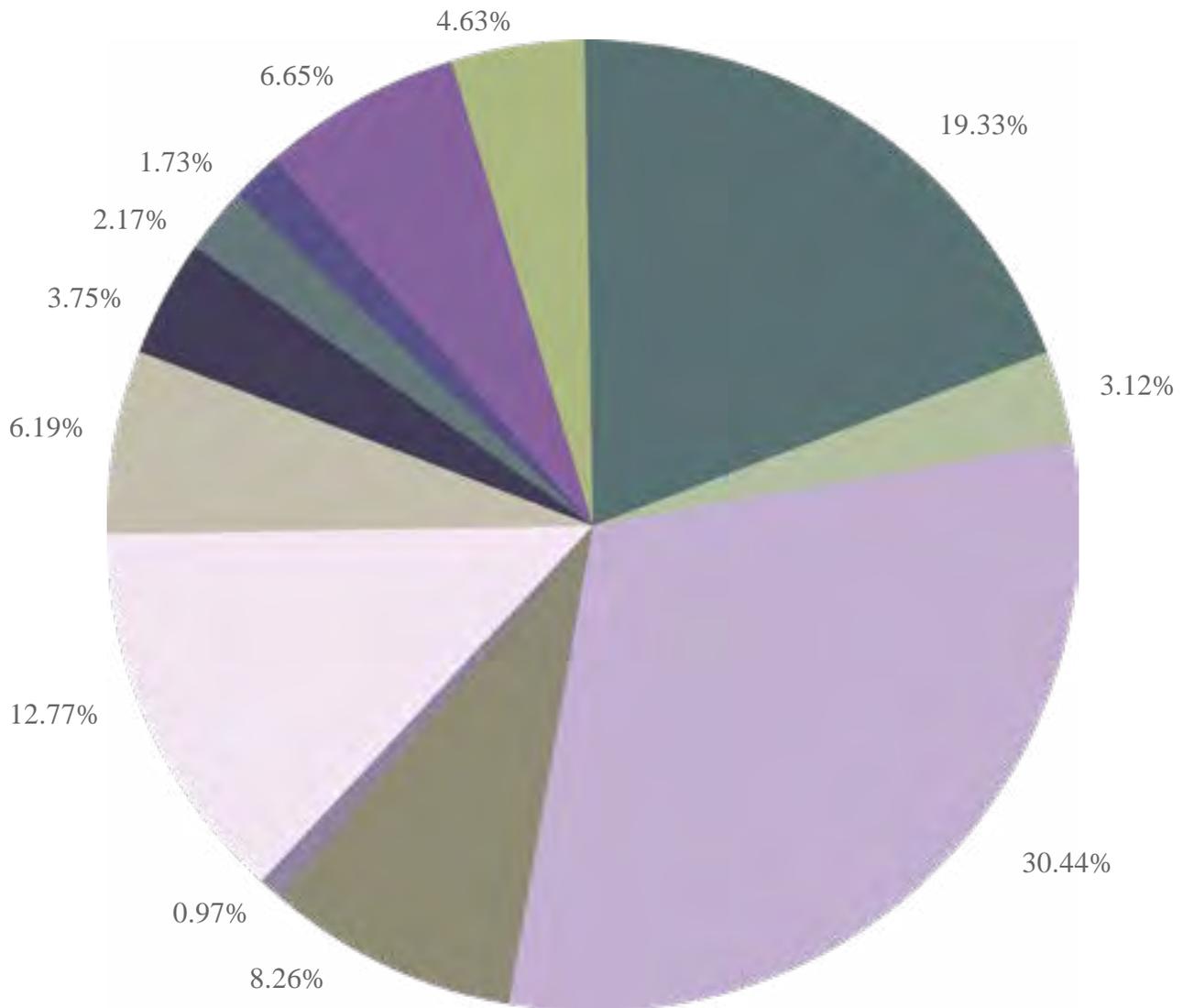
Resolutions provide a historical record of the decisions and priorities of the Chiefs-in-Assembly. They also contain valuable statements on hundreds of issues that have impacted First Nations over many years. It is important to maintain this information through archives to provide a record of decisions and a reference point for future leaders and technicians.

The review process created an index of resolutions from 1975-99 and 2000-2020. This index should be a useful tool in assisting First Nations leadership and staff to locate archived resolutions.

A condensed version of the resolutions was also produced. The condensed version contains all wording from the “Therefore be it resolved” clauses of each resolution. It is recommended that this condensed listing of resolutions, along with the resolutions index, be posted online to facilitate access for leaders and staff and to ensure that the wisdom of past leadership continues to inform the work of the Chiefs of Ontario.

# Chiefs of Ontario Financial Overview

April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020



 <b>Health</b> - \$2,832,441.59	 <b>Youth</b> - \$906,575.62
 <b>Health - Research</b> - \$456,738.18	 <b>Advocacy</b> - \$549,668.00
 <b>Education</b> - \$4,460,382.51	 <b>Policy &amp; Communications</b> - \$317,513.51
 <b>Environment</b> - \$1,209,839.98	 <b>Finance</b> - \$254,021.00
 <b>Justice</b> - \$142,539.16	 <b>Administration - Projects</b> - \$974,939.88
 <b>Social Services</b> - \$1,870,771.16	 <b>Administration - Sector Fees</b> - \$677,800.00

# Chiefs of Ontario Human Resources Report

First established in 2017, and under the direction of the Chief Operating Officer, the Human Resources Officer assists in the overall operations of Human Resource matters within the Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat. These matters include recruitment, external and internal contracts and the development of Human Resources best practices and policies.

In the fall of 2019, the Human Resources department updated the Chiefs of Ontario Employee Policy manual and Harassment Policy. All staff received training regarding the updated manual and new policy conducted by our legal counsel, Hensel Barristers Professional Corporation.

During the review of the Employee Policy Manual, personal time was identified as an issue that needed to be addressed. After further consideration by the management team, personal time was introduced into the Employee Policy Manual to address each employee's needs successfully.

Throughout 2019, three new Directors were also brought on through the Chiefs of Ontario hiring process; this included a Director of Policy and Provincial Affairs, Director of Education for the Secretariat, as well as a Director of Policy and Political Affairs specific to the Ontario Regional Chief's Office.

The Chiefs of Ontario Health & Safety Committee was also established during this time to address Fire Safety within the Secretariat. Appropriate protocols were developed to ensure the safety of employees in the case of an emergency.



*Clockwise from top left: The Chiefs of Ontario Director of Policy and Provincial Affairs, Barret Dokis, Director of Environment, Kathleen Padulo, Director of Finance, Melvin Thompson, and Director of Social Services, Ruby Miller at the All Ontario Chiefs Conference (AOCC) in 2019.*



*Rachel Arsenault, Policy Writer and Researcher with Sally Gaikezheyongai, Environment Coordinator.*



*Alice Longboat, Senior Health Coordinator; with Stewart Ense, Receptionist.*



Sector:

# Education

## Leadership Council Portfolio Holder/Alternates:

Deputy Grand Chief Derek Fox – Portfolio Holder

## First Nations Education

### Coordination Unit (FNECU):

Yolanda Fobister – Grand Council Treaty #3

Diane Maracle-Nadjiwon – Independent First Nations

Murray Waboose - Anishinabek Nation

Kyla Stonefish – Association of Iroquois & Allied Indians

Cherity Calder – Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Councillor Audrey Powless-Bomberry – Six Nations of the Grand River

Wendy Johnson – Indigenous Institutes Consortium

Nelson Toulouse - AMO

Connor Martin – Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council

### Additional Committees/Technicians:

Deputy Grand Chief Derek Fox – Chiefs Committee on Education

Denise Lofstrom – National Indian Education Council

Ogimaa Duke Peltier – AFN Chiefs Committee on Languages

Angel Maracle - AFN Technical Committee on Languages

## Overview

Education is an important part of First Nations cultures. First Nations education strengthens the circle by ensuring that languages, culture and knowledge are shared and renewed with each generation. The Education Coordination Unit facilitates and supports the First Nations' political and technical processes to respond effectively to the needs of First Nations and the initiatives of the federal and provincial governments. It assists First Nations in planning and developing strategies involved in the attainment of First Nation control of First Nations' education. The Unit works to improve information sharing to develop a strong network of First Nation Educators in Ontario.

## Education Sector Highlights:

### Special Education Capacity Building

In October 2019, the Education Sector hosted a Special Education Capacity Building forum in Thunder Bay with the theme “Connecting Educational Practices to Student Growth”. The forum focused on capacity-building opportunities for First Nation educators regarding support for students with special education needs.



*Patrik Lowen, Senior Special Education Support Technician, at the Special Education Forum 2019.*



Alice Longboat, Susan Deley and Patricia Magiskan - Special Education Forum 2019, Thunder Bay.

## Special Education Webinar Series

Through the year, the Education Sector also hosted three Special Education webinars on the following topics, *The Roles and Responsibilities of Educational Assistants*, *Weird and Wonderful: Using Diversity to Solve Behaviour* and *Self-Regulated Learning Problems and Self-Care for Educators: Creating Awareness for Individual and Organization Well-Being*.

## High-Cost Special Education Needs-Based Process

This year the needs-based process distributed \$3.1M to First Nations in Ontario to support special education programming.

## Provincial Reciprocal Education Approach

Amendments to the Ontario Education Act were implemented on September 1, 2019. The Reciprocal Education Approach intends to improve access and reduce barriers for First Nation students who wish to attend First Nation schools or provincially funded schools.

## Interim Funding Approach (IFA)

The Ontario Technical Table-Interim Funding Approach (OTTIFA) created Task Teams to

provide recommendations for enhancements and modifications to the Interim Funding Approach that better suits the needs of First Nations in Ontario. However, the federal election halted work on the Task Teams for much of the year.

Even with the break, OTTIFA submitted four IFA change recommendations for implementation in the 20/21 year including enhancements for adult learners, calculating relevant factors for rural and urban learners and the creation of a First Nation Education Authority. All recommended changes create only gains for First Nations and will not cause decreases in any First Nation's education budget.

## Education Transformation Support

The third support session occurred in Niagara Falls, August 2019. The session focused on financial support for First Nation education staff to assist with the development and management of education budgets as per the new education funding regime implemented in 2019/2020.



*Patricia Magiskan, Special Education Support Technician and Michelle Kennedy.*

## **Regional Education Agreement (REA) Funding**

Indigenous Services Canada allocated funding for the development of Regional Education Agreements. The FNECU supported the development of an assessment process. In 2019/2020, \$1.6M was committed for 17 projects in Ontario.

## **Languages**

Bill C-91: The Indigenous Languages Act received Royal Assent June 21, 2019. Representatives on the national language committees work on the Act's implementation, including defining the roles and responsibilities of the Indigenous Language Commissioners Office and a National Languages Strategy.

## **Post-Secondary Education (PSE)**

Indigenous Services Canada provided funding to conduct a National PSE Review. Ontario will receive \$469K yearly for three years to support engagement and the development of recommendations for funding models.

## **In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward:**

- October 2020, Special Education Sharing Forum Toronto, Insights Into Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments
- Education Transformation Support Session, Tuition Agreements
- Post-Secondary engagement sessions
- Supporting First Nations with Impact of COVID-19 on students, organizations and territories



*Elder Elizabeth Moore and Holly Golabek, Senior Education Coordinator.*

Sector:

# Environment

## Leadership Council Portfolio Holder/Alternates :

Grand Chief Abram Benedict, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne – Portfolio Holder

Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon, Mushkegowuk Council – Alternate

## Chiefs Committee on Environment:

### Anishinabek Nation (AN)

Ogima Kwe Linda Debassige – M'Chigeeng First Nation

Chief Gerry Duquette Jr. – Dokis First Nation

Chief Reginald Niganobe – Mississauga #8 First Nation

Chief Franklin Paibomsai – Whitefish River First Nation

Chief Dean Roy – Sheshegwaning First Nation

Northern Superior Regional Deputy Grand Chief Ed Wawia

### Association of Allied & Iroquois Indians (AIAI)

Chief Jessica Hill – Oneida Nation of the Thames

Chief R. Don Maracle – Mohawk of the Bay of Quinte

Chief Dean Sayers – Ojibways of Batchewana

Chief Denise Stonefish – Delaware Nation

### Independent First Nations (IFN)

Chief Dan Miskokomon – Walpole Island First Nation

Chief Greg Nadjiwon – Chippewas of Nawash

### Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN)

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler

## Overview

The Environment Sector aims to promote active dialogue and facilitate coordinated efforts to support the Inherent and Treaty Rights of First Nations in Ontario in ways that respect each sovereign Nation. The Chiefs Committee on Environment was created in 2013-14 as a technical and advisory body to secure resources for leadership to collectively strategize on province-wide policy positions concerning the environment. The committee is comprised of Chiefs representing the four Provincial Territorial Organizations (PTOs) and representation from the Independent First Nations.

To ensure accountability, the Environment Sector's work is guided by resolutions passed by the Chief-in-Assembly, with advice and oversight by the Leadership Council (LC), and the Chiefs' Committee on the Environment. Each Chief provides oversight and guidance to specific matters falling within his or her portfolio. The portfolios within the Chiefs' Committee on the Environment are, Water, Land, Climate Change and Legislative, Policy Advocacy & Program Access.

## Environment Sector Highlights:

### Water

#### First Nations Water Legislation and Operation & Maintenance Policy Reform

Two sessions were held, involving as many First Nations in Ontario as possible: Southern Session April 24-25, 2019 and the Northern Session May 8-9, 2019. These sessions were well attended and included water technicians who spoke about the changes necessary to improve water management for First Nations.

A summary of these events was presented at the Chiefs of Ontario AOCC June 11-13, 2019 in Sault Ste. Marie. The Ontario Region's suggestions were rolled up into a nationwide report developed by AFN. Work will continue on the development of both national and regional frameworks for First Nations Water Legislation and O&M reform.

## Fisheries Act & Invasive Species

In the fall of 2019 and into 2020, the Chiefs of Ontario partnered with the Ontario Regional office of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Many inland First Nations were not aware of the DFO's projects and the potential opportunities that were available to their communities.

The COO Environment Sector and DFO representatives held sessions with First Nations in Akwesasne, Little Current, Thunder Bay and Toronto to share information on fisheries and fish habitat. The sessions engaged inland First Nations on a variety of topics such as the jurisdictional differences between commercial fisheries overseen by the Province of Ontario and the work being done by the DFO to protect natural fisheries and fish habitat. A final report has been completed and printed and is ready for distribution. *To receive a copy of the final report of the Four Sessions please contact the Chiefs of Ontario's Environment Department.*

## Great Lakes Personhood

One of the highlights of 2019 was the passing of Resolution 26-19 recognizing the Great Lakes water system as a living entity with legal personhood status with all associated rights, responsibility, voice and agency. This assertion of First Nations' unextinguished jurisdiction and title over all the waters of the Great Lakes puts the First Nations' Water Declaration into action while also ensuring the protection of the Great Lakes.

## Great Lakes Canada Ontario Agreement (COA)

The negotiations of a new Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA) continued throughout 2019 and 2020 but have not been finalized. A draft agreement was presented in June 2019 with further discussions scheduled. The COO Environment Sector's First Nations' recommendations for the updated COA have been postponed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and will be rescheduled for a future time to be determined.

## Climate Change

### JCCA Annual Report 2019: First Nations-Canada Joint Committee on Climate Action

The Joint Committee on Climate Action (JCCA) was established to provide technical advice on real and meaningful approaches that position First Nations as leaders in Climate Action. Since 2017, the JCCA has served as a unique forum where First Nations representatives and federal officials come together – as equals – to review, analyse and discuss every aspect of climate policy.

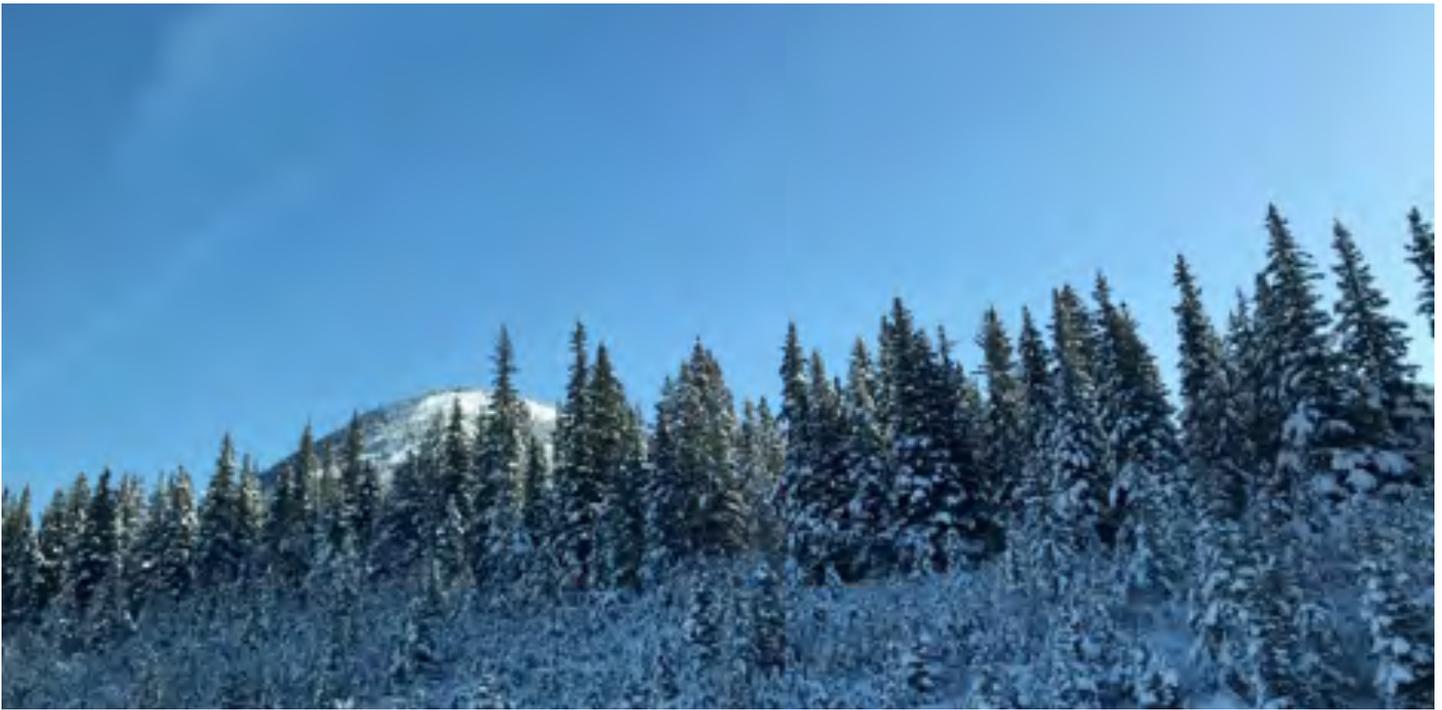
At its core, the JCCA works to support the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, uphold the minimum standard of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) and to include the voices of youth, women, Elders and participants from every region across Canada. In partnership, we jointly advise and track progress on the implementation of Canada's Climate Action Plan, the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change (PCF), and work to advance First Nations climate priorities.

### Our Collective Response to the Climate Crisis

A collective sense of urgency to address the climate crisis is building across Canada. First Nations are at the forefront of this crisis as Nations facing impacts of climate change and as leaders taking decisive action.

In May 2019, the Vuntut Gwitch'in First Nation (Old Crow, Yukon) declared that "climate change constitutes a state of emergency for our land, waters, animals, and peoples." In the summer of 2019, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the House of Commons each declared a climate emergency, emphasizing the need to meet Canada's national emissions target under the Paris Agreement and to make deeper reductions to hold global warming below two degrees Celsius while also pursuing efforts to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Concurrently, youth-led climate strikes have been taking place across the world, demanding immediate climate action. In September 2019, these events culminated in nearly one million participants in Global Climate Strikes across Canada. The rapid mobilization of global youth –



often led by Indigenous youth – has highlighted the urgency to preserve and protect Mother Earth for the next seven generations. Taken, as a whole, these movements send a strong message to world leaders; you must take immediate, transformative action on the climate crisis.

The Seven Generations Principle is attributed to the Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy. It is a tenet practiced by many First Nations. Seven Generation thinking is applied as a lens for decision-making and encompasses not only decision-making that is good for the present, but also ensuring that decisions will have a positive impact, seven generations into the future.

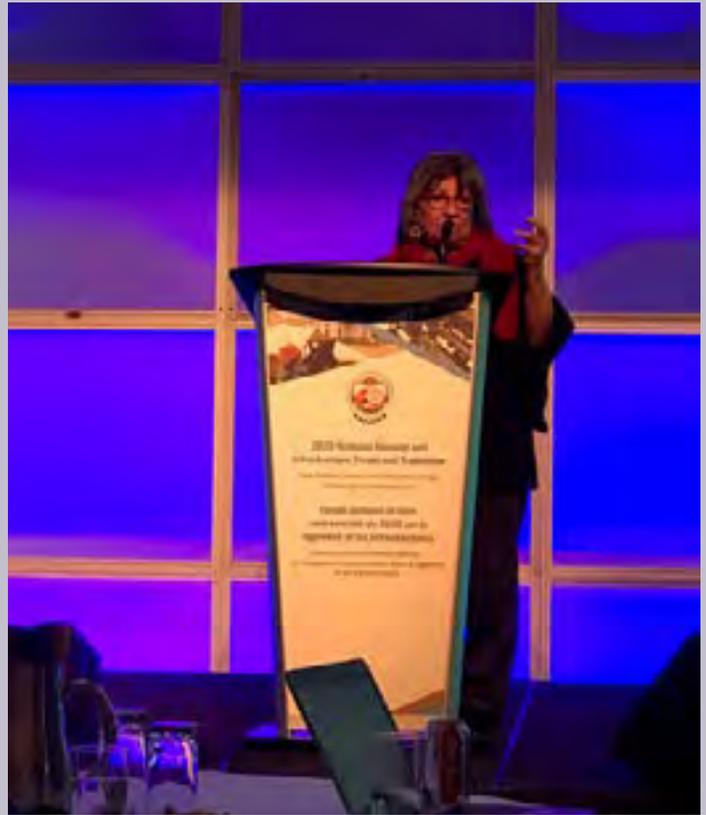
This requires comprehensive, critical thought regarding the balance of current benefits with the benefits and deficits that extend into the future. Elders remind us that we must always think about the coming generations, ensuring that they too have all of the benefits and resources – such as clean water, food sovereignty and a livable environment – so that they too can live a good life. Elders remind us that the preservation of all life is at the core of Traditional Teachings. The Seven Generations Principle can provide an awareness of the importance of our decisions made at the JCCA and the impact they will have as we move into the future.

**The path forward for the JCCA includes:**

1. Ensuring First Nations full and effective participation in federal clean growth and climate change programs
2. Empowering First Nations leadership in emerging opportunities for Climate Action
3. Enabling the meaningful participation of First Nations in any carbon pollution pricing system



*Chief R. Don Maracle: AFN National Housing & Infrastructure Conference, March 2020 Toronto, Ontario.*



Chiefs of Ontario Director of Environment, Kathleen Padulo, presents at the University of Minnesota's Scallen Lecture Series in Fall 2019. <https://cla.umn.edu/human-rights/news-events/news/principled-voice-indigenous-peoples-and-environment>

Chief Jessica Hill, Oneida Nation of the Thames, AFN National Housing & Infrastructure Conference, March 2020 Toronto, Ontario.



Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCoHI).

## The Human Right to Water: A Guide for First Nations Communities and Advocates

In 2016 Human Rights Watch (HRW) released its report, *Make It Safe: Canada's Obligation to End the First Nations Water Crisis* which looked at the human impacts of the ongoing water crisis on First Nations in Ontario and why the problem persists. The project also focused on the distinct impacts experienced by women in these communities related to poor access to water and sanitation.

In its report, HRW found that the Canadian government violated its international human rights obligations toward First Nations persons and communities by failing to remedy the server water crisis.

After the report was presented to the UN treaty body in Geneva February 2016 – that reviewed Canada's human rights record – Prime Minister Trudeau announced that the Federal Government would eliminate the long-term drinking water advisories on First Nation Reserves across Canada within 5 years. We will soon meet that deadline in 2020/21, and there remains much work to do to reach this goal and many First Nations people continue to face daily challenges to access safe water for drinking and hygiene – a fundamental human right easily enjoyed by most Canadians.

In the fall of 2019, the Chiefs of Ontario and HRW released; *The Human Right to Water: A guide for First Nations Communities and Advocates*. This guide seeks to set out how First Nations communities and advocates can use the human rights framework as an additional tool in advocating for safe drinking water.

While First Nations peoples have Aboriginal and Treaty Rights from which they can build their advocacy, the drinking water crisis on-reserve is a space where human rights are also highly relevant. This guide seeks to provide an overview of the legal framework behind the human right to water and recommendations on how to engage government actors on the topic.

It is intended to be a tool that is accessible and useful for Chiefs and councils, communities and individual waterkeepers and advocates. To receive a copy of the Guide, please contact the Chiefs of Ontario's Environment Department.

*Human Rights Watch was founded in 1978 as "Helsinki Watch" to support and protect individual dissidents and independent citizens' groups in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In 1981, Americas Watch was established to demonstrate that human rights standards are universal and should be applied equally to governments of all political stripes. With time, the organization began to address human rights violations in other parts of the world. In 1985, it launched Asia Watch; in 1988, Africa Watch; and in 1989, Middle East Watch. The global ensemble became known as Human Rights Watch in 1991. Paralleling this geographic expansion, Human Rights Watch pioneered the protection of groups that had been marginalized by a narrow interpretation of human rights standards, including women, children, refugees, workers, gay men and lesbians, people with HIV/AIDS, and people with disabilities.*



Sector:

# Health

## Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health (OCCOH)

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler – Co-Chair,  
Leadership Council Portfolio Holder

Chief Tobi Mitchell – Co-Chair,  
Leadership Council Portfolio Holder

Chief R. Donald Maracle – Association  
of Iroquois & Allied Indians

Vacant – Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Deputy Grand Chief Ed Wawia –  
Union of Ontario Indians

Vacant – Grand Council Treaty #3

Sherry-Lyn Hill-Pierce – Six  
Nations of the Grand River

## Health Coordination Unit (HCU)

Georgina Lentz – Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Suzanne Nicholas – Association  
of Iroquois & Allied Indians

Lyndia Jones – Independent First Nations

Jamie Restoule – Union of Ontario Indians

Shelley Skye – Grand Council Treaty #3

Lori Davis Hill – Six Nations  
of the Grand River

## Overview

The Health Sector works to honour First Nations' perspectives of health and ensure that we approach health in a way that is inclusive and integrated. Holistic health is a term used to describe First Nations perspectives on health – heart, spirit, mind and body are all contributing factors to our well-being and living in balance with each other and within Creation.

This past year marked an exciting and very busy time. The Health Sector has worked to continue to support, facilitate and respond to the various needs and requirements of our First Nations in Ontario. This included expanding and building greater communication and mechanisms between our communities, Political Territorial Organizations (PTOs), Independent First Nations and the Unaffiliated First Nations.

## Health Sector Highlights:

### 14<sup>th</sup> Annual COO Health Forum, February 25-27, 2020:

This year we celebrated our 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Health Forum with the theme *Advancing First Nation Best Practices: Stories of Resilience, Innovation, and Success*. This year was a success with a record-breaking 322 registrants.

For the first time, the Health Sector opted to have First Nations communities, health providers, and leadership determine the agenda and submit abstracts on specific topics that they would like to present, share and network upon – the response was tremendous! Workshop topics included land-based healing, prenatal opioid exposure, data management and research, as well as practicing ceremony and leadership.

View the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual COO Health Forum *Advancing First Nations Best Practices: Stories of Resilience, Innovation, and Success* here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xEeshpS6ss>



Chiefs of Ontario Health Sector staff attend the AOCC 2019.

## Trilateral First Nations Health Senior Officials Committee (TFNHSOC)

TFNHSOC was less active due to a reassessment and review of the existing Terms of Reference. However, both Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health (OCCOH) and Health Coordination Unit (HCU) have determined that further work is required to strengthen relationships with Indigenous Services Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB-OR), Ministry of Health: Public Health Division and Chiefs of Ontario, particularly in light of challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Program Areas

### Public Health

This past year saw the development of a Tuberculosis Advisory Committee in partnership with the Ontario First Nation HIV/AIDS Circle. The deliverables included a Developed Tuberculosis Community Resource Listing, two Public Service Announcements (PSAs) that were translated into Mohawk, Ojibway, Moose Cree and Oji-Cree and a TB Management Algorithm.

In September 2019, the Chiefs of Ontario Health Sector and Registered Nurses Association of Ontario signed an agreement that identifies key priorities including First Nations determinants of

health, addressing mental wellness, addiction and suicide prevention as well as improving health services across care sectors including public health, primary care and home and community care.

The Health Sector has also worked on *Engaging for Change: Building Culturally Safe Care*, the Chiefs of Ontario and the University of Western - Canadian Institute of Health Research Grant.

### Mental Health and Addictions

#### Resolution 20/18: Prescription Opioid Surveillance

Mandated continued work on Opioid Surveillance previously conducted under the mandate of Resolution 13/10. The Opioid Steering Committee, mandated by Resolution 13/10, continues to work with the Institute for Clinical and Evaluative Sciences and the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network.

A proposal to the Canadian Institutes for Health Research for a 4-year research project: *Understanding Opioid Use and Harms among First Nations People in Ontario: Integrating Administrative Data with Guidance from Communities*, was submitted to CIHR in March 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the proposal review process has been delayed until fall 2020. If successful, funding will be granted in



Alice Longboat and Roseanne Sutherland at the Jordan's Principle Knowledge Exchange - Ontario Gathering, December 2019.

early spring 2021. As an interim step, an Applied Health Research Question (AHRQ) to Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) has been submitted to update the report, *Opioid Use Among First Nations in Ontario*. This interim step will be guided by the Steering Committee.

### **Score Card on the Mental Health of Children and Youth in Ontario**

ICES developed a baseline scorecard report describing the state of the child and youth mental health and addictions system. The scorecard was updated in 2017. A similar, adult scorecard was introduced in March 2018.

These scorecards present results for all Ontarians and provide comprehensive trends over time in Ontario's mental health and addictions system, however, these provincial scorecards do not contain Indigenous-specific mental health data.

Based on the Mental Health and Addictions Scorecard, the Mental Health Awareness and Wellbeing Group (MHAWG) requested a First Nations-specific report. This report will be the first of its kind, assessing mental health and addictions-related performance and contextual indicators among Ontario's First Nations populations. This report will assess First Nations mental health and addictions-related service use and outcomes between 2011 and 2017 through linkage with ICES administrative health databases. Completion is anticipated by late Fall 2020.

### **Resolution 18/18: Health and Human Resources Strategy**

The trilateral Mental Health and Addictions Working Group discussed the need for a special, cross-sector, government-inclusive Task Force to address this resolution. The Task Force will identify needs and advocate for training resources to address mental health and addiction in communities through the development of a First Nations workforce. The work will carry forward on this resolution to 2020-2021.

Early impacts of COVID-19 indicate that we should anticipate additional needs for Mental Health Human resources in the coming year(s) as the trauma, unresolved grief and residual effects of the pandemic are felt throughout communities.

### **Midwifery**

#### **Resolution 19/16: Support for First Nations Midwifery in Ontario**

This resolution supports the development of a First Nation's Midwifery Strategy in partnership with the Association of Ontario Midwives. The Chiefs of Ontario supported the second midwifery summit in Thunder Bay in February 2020 with funding from FNIHB Ontario Region. This summit provided an opportunity to build on the discussions from the previous year supporting the development of a strategic plan to increase access to midwifery among Ontario First Nations. COO will continue to provide advocacy and support for this important aspect of maternal and child health.

## Non-Insured Health Benefits Navigators:

### AFN NIHB Joint Review

The AFN continues its work on the NIHB Joint Review. The information-gathering stage resulted in recommendations reviewed for Mental Health Counselling, Vision, Dental, Pharmacy and Medical Supplies. The Benefit Recommendation plans are then transferred into Benefit Implementation plans with timelines.

Due to challenges with scheduling, there was a delay to meet timelines and work is ongoing. Medical Transportation is the last benefit to be reviewed because of its complexity, requiring multiple NIHB Joint Review Steering Committee (JRSC) meetings. An Administration and Operational Review will follow.

### Ontario NIHB Networking Group Meetings, October 29-31, 2019

The Ontario NIHB Network Meeting reviewed the Medical Transportation Policy Framework and the Medical Transportation Recommendations. Issues that are Ontario-specific are brought to Ontario Region to expedite follow-up action.



Chief Mary Duckworth with Alanis Obomsawin at the Jordan's Principle Exchange - Ontario Gathering, December 2019.

### National Navigators Network (NNN) Meeting, November 26-27, 2019

The NNN met to review Medical Transportation Recommendations, bring issues to FNIHB and had a demonstration of the new Express Scripts Claims Processing System.



NIHB and Jordan's Principle Navigators Emily King and Miryan Rutledge attend the Jordan's Principle Knowledge Exchange with COO Health Coordinator, Tia Pettit in December, 2019.



*Patient Advisory Group member, Lorraine Cook, Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald and Director of Health, Carmen R. Jones attend launch of the Diabetes Report in November, 2019.*

## Jordan's Principle

### Jordan's Principle Knowledge Exchange, December 2019

A Jordan's Principle Knowledge Exchange Ontario Gathering was hosted by Independent First Nations in December 2019. The gathering was necessary due to the increasing need for training on Jordan's Principle implementation and application process. The Gathering was a success with 262 participants. The workshops and plenary sessions are available on the COO website.

### 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Health Forum, February 25-27, 2020

The Jordan's Principle Working Group held an Open Door Engagement and Outreach with FNIHB Jordan's Principle for community health directors and other delegates. The goals are to work with the Ontario Region's Jordan's Principle Working Group and identify and resolve gaps in Jordan's Principle Process in Ontario. The goal is to actively address jurisdictional and policy issues between different levels of government and departments to arrive at solutions or recommendations to improve services and outcomes for First Nations children.

## Research and Data Governance

### Diabetes Research

The project, in partnership with Queen's University, ICES, and Laurentian University, utilized the Indian Registry System to link ICES administrative databases for Ontario First Nation diabetes research is now complete.

The report on the qualitative portion involving five communities is still in progress and is expected to be completed in summer 2020. The Diabetes Peoples Report is still in process with fact sheets and recommendations.

The full Atlas is available on the Chiefs of Ontario website under the Health Priorities Tab, under Health Research and Data Management. <http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/priorities/health/healthresearch/>. The RHS Phase III Peoples Report can be found there along with the Data Governance Committee application.

### First Nations Data Governance Models: Quality Performance Measurement Project

This is a project with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) to determine if the resources allocated to First Nations are working to improve the status of Ontario First Nations' health and well-being.

## Digital Health Tools and Resources

First Nation Digital Health Ontario (FNDHO) is an arms-length body created to assist in the promotion and support of digital health tools to First Nations throughout Ontario. There are currently 77 First Nations being supported by FNDHO for use of community electronic medical records within their respective health service organizations.

In July 2019, the Assembly of First Nations passed Resolution 18/19, calling for Indigenous Services Canada to direct resources regarding digital health, connectivity and data governance matters to First Nations as they deem appropriate. While implementation is pending, negotiations on this matter continue with FNIHB and ISC.

## Health Transformation

### Government Relations and Health Transformation

#### Bill-74: The People's Health Care Act

In April 2019, Former Chief Elaine Johnston presented to the Standing Committee on Social Policy on behalf of COO, stressing Ontario's failure to consult First Nations regarding Bill-74 and its proposed changes to health systems in Ontario. A key recommendation, which was subsequently addressed, was to amend Ministerial privilege to designate a First Nation-specific Advisory Council – not a pan-Aboriginal "Indigenous Council".

Provisions were also made to ensure that the Ministry of Health is in direct contact with adjacent First Nations regarding the formation of Ontario Health Teams.

#### Health System Transformation:

As part of his campaign promises, Prime Minister Trudeau committed to the creation of an Indigenous Health Act which would re-examine how health care services are provided and governed by First Nations and other Indigenous populations in Canada. Work commenced on examining this with the national Chiefs Committee on Health (CCOH). Significant concerns were raised about inclusion with other Indigenous populations such as the Métis and Inuit. This is currently under review.

## Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council (OFNYPC)

### Stories from our Roots – PhotoVoice Project

The Health Sector and OFNYPC, in partnership with the University of Western Ontario and the Ontario Brain Institute and funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health, have completed the final year of the Stories from our Roots project. Stories from our Roots was developed as a three-year project in support of First Nations Youth Life Promotion. The project was a success, with five Youth Gatherings held in Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie, Little Current, Barrie and London.

The Gatherings provided capacity training, facilitation and mental wellness support to over 100 First Nations Youth across Ontario. The Gatherings included SafeTalk© training, a sharing circle, and 1.5 days of PhotoVoice facilitation training. At one of these sessions, COO partnered with TakingITGlobal to provide additional training to youth participants on a variety of media and video technologies.

The OFNYPC is currently in the evaluation phase and seeks to measure the success and impact of the project to identify any gaps and to inform the future direction and decision-making.

### OFNYPC Meetings

This year, the OFNYPC met three times, and we are proud of the work we have accomplished. We have reviewed our Terms of Reference, finalized our Strategic Planning document and met with Indigenous Services Canada and the Youth Opportunities Fund.

We also used this time to determine the direction of the OFNYPC through updates to the Youth Council Development Toolkit. These meetings were also valuable opportunities to review past gatherings and to plan for Chiefs Assemblies and forums.



*OFNYPC Representatives Brandon Doxtator, Sheldon Adams, and Chloe Smith present at the 14th Annual Health Forum.*

### **Participation in Various Chiefs of Ontario Assemblies and Forums**

Throughout the year, the OFNYPC had opportunities to present a youth perspective at various assemblies and forums. This year, members of the OFNYPC attended the Political Strategy Session and Housing forum in October 2019. The OFNYPC also attended the COO Special Chiefs Assembly in February 2020. We used this time to provide plenary updates on our work, announce upcoming activities and gatherings. We also met with the Canadian Roots Exchange.

At the Annual Health Forum in February 2020, the OFNYPC and the PhotoVoice Steering Committee provided a plenary presentation to an audience of health workers. At this time, the OFNYPC also met with the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions while also attending various workshops and presentations.

### **2nd Annual Youth Tobacco and Cannabis Conference – March 6-8, 2020, Toronto, Ontario**

This conference gathered approximately 50 youth participants for an interactive and engaging two days of education, discussions, presentations, networking and resource creation. Cannabis presentations included Understanding Inherent Jurisdiction, the Industrial Hemp Industry and looking at where we are one-year post-legalization.

Switching the narrative from commercial use, we applied the knowledge of our Elder to lead us through tobacco teachings and tie making, participated in a pipe ceremony, planted traditional tobacco plants guided by local Knowledge Keepers and discussed community health issues and policies to lead toward the creation of smoke-free spaces.

### **OFNYPC Youth Website**

The OFNYPC and Life Promotion website was made possible through partnership and generous financial contributions from the Ontario Brain Institute. The website will provide First Nations youth a platform to connect, share, access resources and serve as a source for the Youth Council to share information and events with First Nations communities and youth.



*OFNYPC Representative Lance Copegog with Premier Doug Ford, October 2019.*

# COVID-19 Public Health and Pandemic Response

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The first case of COVID-19 was detected in Ontario in January 2020. On March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic.

The Chiefs of Ontario (COO) Health Sector, with the Ontario Regional Chief's Office, have been supporting and advocating for First Nation communities to ensure their safety and well-being during the COVID-19 crisis and this continues to be a number one priority.

Since early March, daily meetings have been convened and attended with First Nations and our other government partners and the various impacted Ministries. Given COO's established research relationship with the Institute of Clinical and Evaluative Studies, we were capable of assisting in the monitoring of First Nations for the COVID-19 virus.

Significant and substantive work has also occurred in the areas of ensuring personal protective equipment, COVID-19 testing, food security, enhanced nursing surge capacity, relationship building with Ontario Health and regional tables, pandemic planning, guidance documents and knowledge and information sharing.

Sector:

## Social Services

### Leadership Council Portfolio Holder/Alternates:

Grand Chief Joel Abram, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

### Chiefs Committee on Social:

Councillor Melba Thomas – Six Nations of the Grand River Territory

Chief Arnold Paul, Temagami First Nation – Independent First Nations

Chief Dan Miskokomon, Bkejwanong Territory – Independent First Nations

Chief Tim Thompson, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne – Independent First Nations

Ogimaa Duke Peltier, Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory – Anishinabek Nation

Regional Deputy Grand Council Chief Joe Miskokomon – Anishinabek Nation

Chief Laurie Carr, Hiawatha First Nation – Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Deputy Grand Chief Walter Naveau – Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Grand Chief Solomon – Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Vacant – Grand Council Treaty #3

### Social Sector Coordination Unit:

Diane Maracle – Independent First Nations

Arliss Sky – Six Nations of the Grand River Territory

Debbie Lipscombe – Grand Council Treaty #3

Bobby Narcisse – Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Adrienne Pelletier – Anishinabek Nation

Zachariah General – Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

## Overview

The Chiefs Committee on Social (CCOS) and the Social Sector Coordination Unit (SSCU) govern the Social Sector at Chiefs of Ontario (COO).

The SSCU is a technical and advisory body that provides options to CCOS. Social's mandate is to protect and maintain our Rights and jurisdiction over the social well-being of our communities and to secure resources for leadership. The Social Sector provides coordination support, technical information, and recommendations to the Leadership Council and COO on child welfare, social assistance, and early learning and child care.

## Social Sector Highlights:

### Technical Table on Bill C-92: An Act respecting Child and Family Wellbeing

The Technical Table is comprised of Indigenous Services Canada, Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the Social Sector Coordination Unit and the Chiefs Committee on Social. The Technical Table met 8 times over the year to discuss the Ontario Special Study, *Bill C-92: Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children and Families* and the Ontario First Nations Child and Family Services Policy and Funding Reform Joint Commitment implementation work plan. The Ontario Special Study was completed and accepted by Resolution at the February Special Chiefs Assembly. Child Welfare System reform discussions continue with Ontario and Canada.

### Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT)

The Tribunal's jurisdiction was to end on March 31, 2019, however, the court continued the litigation and decision process regarding the remaining compensation motion for children and families. Tribunal jurisdiction continues until all matters are dealt with.

In addition to the CHRT process, the National Advisory Committee and the Consultation Committee on Child Welfare have each met 5 times throughout the year to discuss the First Nations Child and Family Services Prevention



Director of Social Services, Ruby Miller.

Directive, Capital Directive and the National Recipient Guide for reimbursement of prevention services at actual costs. Social Services Director, Ruby Miller and Grand Chief Joel Abram attend both committees. Grand Chief Abram attends the National Chiefs Committee Child and Family Services and Self Determination, which is overseeing the implementation of *Bill C-92: Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families*. Ruby Miller attends the Technical Committee for this Chiefs Committee.

Finally, since 2016, First Nations have been able to access various funding pots including Immediate Relief Prevention Funding, Ramp-Up funding and Community Well-being and Jurisdiction Initiative Funding. For the fiscal year 2020-2021 an amount of \$37,921,926.81 is available for First Nations via the following:

- Community Based Prevention, \$15,901,600.81
- Community Well-being and Jurisdiction Initiative, \$17,616,255.12
- Community Well-being and Jurisdiction Initiative Ramp-Up, \$4,404,070.88

At the February 2020 Special Chiefs Assembly, no funding formula resolution was accepted by the Chiefs-in-Assembly. Ontario Regional Chief sent a letter to Indigenous Services Canada

indicating that the federal government will need to connect with PTOs/IFN/Unaffiliated First Nations to determine what distribution process or formula they recommend. Discussions regarding remoteness and population-density are ongoing.

### Ontario Special Study

In January 2016, the CHRT issued the decision that Canada has willfully discriminated against First Nations children through inadequate funding and services. As a result, the Chiefs-in-Assembly moved Resolution 17/21: Ontario Special Study, intending to reform the federal First Nation Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program to ensure substantive equality.

The study offers four key perspectives: prevention services, grass-roots funding mechanisms, a transformation process for the FNCFS program and an examination of the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement. In February 2020, the Chiefs-in-Assembly moved Resolution 20/14: Ontario Special Study Report (2019), which enabled Ontario to officially accept the report, call on all governments to work with First Nations in Ontario to implement all 27 recommendations – including a new funding approach and for the Social Services Coordination Unit to formulate an implementation strategy.



*Councillor Saga Williams of Curve Lake First Nation met with Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, Honourable Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General, Honourable Doug Downey, Attorney General, and Honourable Jill Dunlop, Minister of Children and Women's Issues to discuss human trafficking in February, 2020.*

**Early Learning and Child Care**

The Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework has ten years of funding to support implementation. Chiefs have received three years of funding and will be heading into 2020-2021 fiscal year funding. In 2018-19, the \$12.8 million allocated to Ontario was split into two years, 40% was pushed into 2019-2020 and 60% pushed into 2020-2021 minus the \$1.2 million designated for partnership and governance of the 2018-2019 funding. Previously, Chiefs had determined the Ontario First Nations Limited Partnership Funding Formula would be used for the distribution of these funds. Nationally, for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the National Expert Working Group will revisit the formula used to distribute the funding to the Provinces and Territories.

The Social Services Coordination Unit is in the process of creating a regional table to discuss implementation and improve children's programming as directed by the Chiefs Committee on Social. Further, Chiefs are continuing to examine an Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (IELCC) contribution agreement process. This new process combines all federal funding initiatives and states that there will be no reduction in funding.

**Joint Social Services Table (JSST)**

The JSST met seven times throughout the year and held sixteen teleconferences to discuss the Ontario Social Assistance Reform Plan (SARP). To determine a path forward, the First Nation caucus of the JSST met seven times.

The SARP contains four pillars: Moving People to Employment, Assisting the Most Vulnerable, Cutting Red Tape and Reducing the Administrative Burden. For the JSST, the most urgent priority is the identification of priority services, maintaining existing program structures that respond effectively to First Nations needs, and ensuring that the Reform is built on First Nations realities and required enhancements.

Additionally, the JSST is examining an Ontario Disability Support Program pilot for on-reserve delivery, seeking a legislative exemption and opt-out clause to assert First Nation jurisdiction as well as implementing previous Chiefs-in-Assembly resolutions directing the Reform and Update of the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement social services portion.



*Social Service Portfolio Holder, Grand Chief Joel Abram with Chief Arnold Paul.*

### **Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Project:**

- 5 years of project funding provided by the Department of Justice Canada
- The project focus is development and provision of legal resource information, culturally competent educational and awareness information, initial awareness assessment and training
- Work with and support First Nations to develop appropriate workplace policies within their communities
- Develop and distribute relevant and appropriate resources

- An IELCC Ontario regional allocation reflective of Ontario actual needs and population
- Continued Joint Social Services Table meetings and to pilot Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) programs on reserve and the Reform of Social Assistance
- Develop an Implementation Strategy of the Ontario Special Study recommendations and initiate the identified recommendation priorities
- Continue advocacy at the National level to ensure National processes and/or Child Welfare standards do not impede or conflict with Ontario First Nation jurisdiction and laws
- Continue and expand support, awareness and training for First Nations regarding Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

### **In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward:**

In the year ahead, the Social Sector plans to accomplish:

- First Nation, Metis, Inuit Children, Youth and Families Act: Ontario Specific Approach Regional Gathering to discuss federal legislation implementation, First Nations law development and required support

# Communications & Federal Affairs

## Overview

The Communications and Federal Affairs (CFA) Sector is a new sector, led by Scott Cavan, who was appointed to the role of Director of CFA in October 2019. Directed and supported by mandate, the Director of CFA develops, organizes and oversees the progress and direction of communications and federal government matters as mandated by the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

The CFA is a sector that actively collaborates with all sectors within the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) Secretariat while also supporting the Ontario Regional Chief's communication needs in a non-partisan manner.

With a cross-sector approach and working as a bridge in communication between the Secretariat and political office, the CFA Sector allows the organization to communicate and liaise with the federal government consistently. The sector also provides additional support for assemblies.

The CFA has increased the participation of federal ministers in COO meetings and this participation is expected to grow in the coming year. The CFA also works with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), ensuring that the Chiefs in Ontario have the information necessary to guide decision-making, AFN resolutions and policy at the federal level.

Strategic federal relationships with the CFA have ensured that the sector can provide ongoing support, information sharing and analysis regarding federal legislation, policies and processes. It also streamlines federal relations, as it functions as a portal to communicate and coordinate the needs of the Chiefs at the federal level in a focused manner.

In addition to the work completed by the CFA Sector, the unit continues to ensure that the messages, activities and priorities of the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) are brought to the public's attention. To this effect, the CFA coordinates public relations and the exposure of our First Nations' priorities through an array of mediums such as

press releases, speaking engagements by First Nations leadership, conferences, videos, radio, interviews with media outlets and social media.

## Communications & Federal Affairs Sector Highlights:

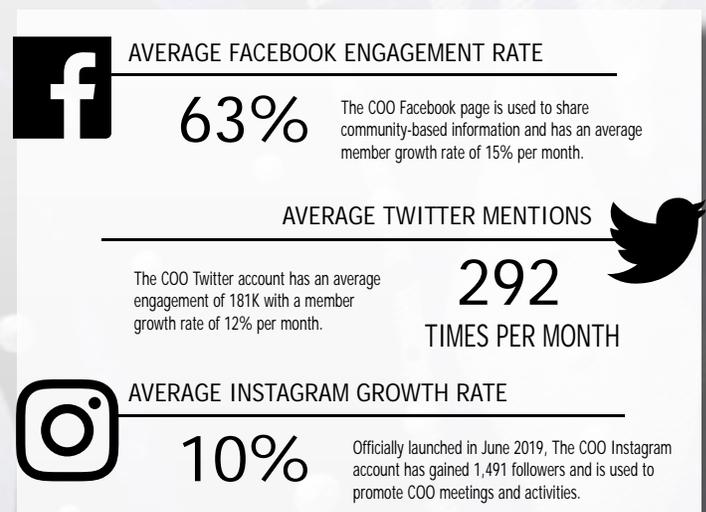
### Communications, Outreach and Public Awareness

Previously, the sector developed a Comprehensive Communications and Media Strategy to address communication priorities. Over the past year, we have continued to further this strategy to advance COO's internal and external communications and public awareness initiatives, ensuring the greatest possible impact in supporting First Nations citizens and leadership.

The communications and the tools developed by the CFA make it possible to reach First Nations directly, to support the work not only of COO but also to amplify and support the initiatives of Political Territorial Organizations, youth and Indigenous organizations.

### Social Media

The CFA provides social media content on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with almost 30,000 followers across platforms. This has dramatically increased the reach and impact of messaging coming from the COO Secretariat and the Office of the Ontario Regional Chief. Through social media, the CFA shares events, news and contributions of First Nations. Our online community continues





Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald, Director of Policy and Provincial Affairs, Barret Dokis, and Director of Communications and Federal Affairs, Scott Cavan at the Chiefs of Ontario Political Strategy Session in October, 2019.

to grow daily and is vital in increasing COO’s reach and impact through sharing, liking and following. Stay current with the latest news and events from the Chiefs of Ontario on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram: @ChiefsofOntario.

## Federal Affairs

The Chiefs of Ontario Communications and Federal Affairs (CFA) Unit provided management oversight for following initiatives and continued to provide support or seek additional resources to advance First Nations voices.

- Led the development of the Chiefs of Ontario Federal Priorities Document: *Towards a New Relationship: A Discussion Paper of First Nations Election Priorities*
- Political Strategy Session Support – Communications worked to support First Nations leadership in Ontario to address outstanding issues and to encourage collaboration and strong partnerships through effective strategies built on mutual respect between the federal and provincial governments and First Nations

- Supported COO Sectors, acting as a liaison for information sharing, facilitation of networking, meetings and support regarding issues such as Carbon Tax, OI Leasing, Bill C-92 and Bill C-91, the Recognition and Implementation of the Indigenous Rights Framework
- Coordinated and set the table for the meetings with various government officials – including Senators and Ministers – alongside COO sectors and First Nations leadership as needed

## Accomplishments:

The Chiefs of Ontario Communications and Federal Affairs (CFA) Unit provided management oversight for special initiatives and continued to provide support or seek additional resources to advance the following projects in 2019/20:

- Chiefs of Ontario COVID-19 Resource Hub: On March 19, 2020, the Chiefs of Ontario launched a new website to enhance the distribution of Public Health and other relevant information regarding COVID-19

- #NotACostume, Cultural Appropriation Campaign: Launched a marketing campaign alongside Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn (BBDO) Canada to highlight cultural appropriation issues
- COVID-19 Regional Chief Webinar Series: Assisted the Regional Chief in conducting daily media briefings via teleconference and social media to provide updates on Chiefs of Ontario's ongoing response to COVID-19 and to assist communities in understanding the scope of COVID-19 within their territories
- Health Department Spring 2019 Newsletter: Communications published the bi-annual electronic health newsletter
- Successfully launched Ontario First Nations Young Peoples' Council's new website in March 2020
- Coordinated the redesign of two new innovative websites for the Health and Education departments to connect First Nations digitally; the projected launch date is Fall 2020
- Enhanced still photography and video are now routinely captured by the CFA, as well as in-house produced videos and media materials for distribution

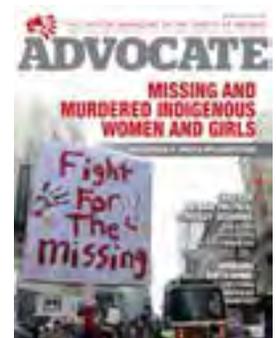


*Communications Officer, Genna Benson and Alanis Obomsawin at the Jordan's Principle Gathering in December, 2019.*



## The Advocate Magazine

In 2019-2020 the CFA produced two editions of COO's magazine, The Advocate. The Advocate is a bi-annual glossy magazine that advocates for First Nation issues and provides a medium to share insights through compelling articles and storytelling. Over 3,000 copies were printed with an estimated readership of over 8,100, distributed to all 633 First Nations across Canada with a significant focus on Ontario, friendship centers, Provincial Territorial Organizations and various government agencies and advertisers. The publication is sent via direct mail and is available through social media outlets.



## In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward:

- Watch for an improved and updated Chiefs of Ontario website in 2020-2021, along with the launch of the Chiefs of Ontario Education and Health Websites
- Issue #8 of The Advocate will be released in the Fall of 2020

# Policy & Provincial Affairs

## Overview

The Policy and Provincial Affairs (PPA) Sector at the Chiefs of Ontario is led by Sector Director, Barret Dokis, who was appointed to the role in July of 2019. The Director of PPA coordinates and organizes the development of organizational briefing notes, communicate updates and policy development and analysis to ensure leadership is updated and informed on policy developments impacting First Nation communities in Ontario. Further, the Director provides support to leadership in Ontario and the directors at the COO secretariat related to relationship building and developments with the Ontario Government.

The Policy Director provides guidance and support for policy initiatives, provincial relations, program management and oversees emerging initiatives. This is accomplished through the oversight of internal and external briefings and reports streamlining the policy process within the COO Secretariat.

The PPA also provides support to the Secretariat at large during the planning and implementation of all leadership meetings. This includes providing guidance and advice on agenda development, coordination of documentation and working with the Chief Operating Officer for operational oversight during Chiefs Assemblies.

Working with the Communications and Federal Affairs (CFA) Sector, the organization continues to improve and strengthen internal and external communications related to policy support work, advice and government relations, advancing and supporting the building of knowledge of COO processes and practices to support transparency and accountability.

The PPA works in tandem with the Office of the Ontario Regional Chief to ensure consistent communication, advice and coordination between the Secretariat and the Regional Chief's Office. This system is practical and relevant to the needs and mandates set forth by leadership.

The PPA has provided support to the Regional Chief's Office, the Leadership Council and all Leadership in Ontario through effective communications, analysis of provincial legislation and policy development and building key relationships within the Ontario government.

While the PPA Sector provides advice, quality assurance and guidance on departmental initiatives, some secretariat initiatives are exclusively under this sector's purview.

## Provincial Relations

After its election in June 2018, the Ontario government's engagement with First Nation leadership and communities was considered nominal. Through 2019, the COO Secretariat and the Office of the Regional Chief have worked to increase the Ontario government's interaction and engagement with First Nation leadership. Through consistent contact and relationship building the Ontario government's relationship with First Nation leadership has improved considerably.

This improved relationship has allowed for more significant input into new legislation and policy development. While concerns with the specific policies and legislation being developed remain, leadership and COO have been active in bringing forward their positions and recommendations to Ontario including:

1. Leadership Council meeting with the Ontario Premier
2. Ontario has included Indigenous-specific supports in its 2020-2025 Human Trafficking Strategy
3. Relationship building meetings between the Ontario Regional Chief and various relevant Ministers within the Ontario government
4. Leadership Council meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to discuss concerns related to *Bill 156, Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020*
5. A strong working relationship between the Office of the Regional Chief and offices of the Premier and the Minister of Indigenous Affairs

## Housing

The Chiefs of Ontario coordinates the information delivery and participation of First Nations in Ontario related to the Assembly of First Nations' National Housing Strategy. The strategy, which was endorsed by leadership in principle, calls for the transfer of care and control of housing to First Nations. In Ontario, the Chiefs of Ontario has been directed to coordinate discussions that will lead to a framework for the establishment of care and control in Ontario.

In August 2019, the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure hosted a meeting at the Indigenous Services Canada offices in Toronto, where it was decided to host a Chiefs Housing Forum in October of 2019. At the October Housing Forum, an outline of possible options for the establishment of care and control in Ontario was presented. It was decided that further development and analysis with comprehensive engagement were needed.

In the winter of 2020, the Chiefs of Ontario worked with ISC to establish an engagement process. As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, these engagement plans are under review by the Chiefs Committee and a new process will be established.

## Heritage and Burials

In the absence of a Director of Justice at the COO Secretariat, the Director of PPA is providing support to the Heritage and Burials file. In 2020/2021, it is expected that a Director of Justice will be hired and this file transferred back to its respective sector. For the 2020/2021 year, the Director of PPA will be coordinating the transfer of historical items and ancestors from their current location to a new storage facility. The new Director of Justice will be responsible for re-establishing the Heritage and Burials working group.

## Policing

In partnership with the Director of CFA, the Director of PPA helps oversee an external agreement with a legal advocate who provides support to the 19 First Nation communities who are signatories to the Ontario First Nations Policing Agreement (OFNPA). This agreement is up for renewal, and a new agreement is



*Director of Policy and Provincial Affairs, Barret Dokis.*

expected to be established in 2020/2021.

Additionally, the Director of the PPA accepted an invitation to sit on the Ontario Provincial Police's newly established Aboriginal Advisory Council. This council had its first meeting during the 2019/2020 calendar year. Further updates for leadership will be forthcoming, including the recommendation of a permanent member to represent COO on this council.

The Director of Policy also provided support to the Office of the Ontario Regional Chief during the rail blockades during winter 2020. By ensuring the Regional Chief's Office was in touch with the OPP, useful updates and information were provided to leadership promptly.

## **In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward:**

- Transfer the Heritage and Burials file back to the Justice Sector
- Housing Engagement – will tentatively be online in response to the COVID-19 social distancing requirements
- Adapting the Chiefs of Ontario policies, bylaws and operations to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic; including hosting an online Chiefs meeting

# Transformation, The Path Forward: Batchewana First Nation Hosts 45<sup>th</sup> All Ontario Chiefs Conference

During the week of June 11, 2019, Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald extended her greetings to the Youth, Elders, Leadership and Citizens participating in the 45th Annual All Ontario Chiefs Conference (AOCC) held in Sault Ste. Marie, on behalf of Batchewana First Nation, co-hosted by the Chiefs of Ontario and the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians.

The theme of the 2019 AOCC was *Transformation: The Path Forward*. During the three-day conference, various government representatives, First Nations leadership and citizens gathered to discuss key policy and legislative issues, all with the common goal of moving forward together toward a renewed working relationship between Nations.

The agenda also included updates and information sessions from various COO department sectors, such as environment, social services and health. Using an alternative delivery, information sessions were held throughout the venue to enhance participation and engagement of delegates in assembly, as well as to establish positive connections to move our collective priorities forward, while ensuring leadership felt that their voice had value.



Members of the Leadership Council meet at the AOCC 2019.



Chief Dean Sayers, AOCC 2019.

Several positive outcomes and resolutions came as a result of true unity within the conference, including the passing of a resolution enabling First Nations to assert complete jurisdiction to govern all cannabis operations within their territories.

Moved by Thessalon First Nation Chief Edward Boulrice, with Garden River First Nation Chief Paul Syrette acting as the seconder, this resolution acknowledges that First Nations may consider following federal and provincial regulations while exploring opportunities within the cannabis industry. Still, it clearly defines that First Nations have the jurisdiction to establish their laws and regulations.

The document also urges federal and provincial governments to eliminate barriers and to “cease interference that would impede nation-to-nation trade and commerce.”

In addition to discussions regarding policy and legislative issues, the conference also included several social activities, such as a golf tournament at neighbouring Garden River First Nation, a boat tour of Lake Superior and a fish fry at Obadjiwan Reserve, just outside of Sault Ste. Marie.

Outside of exploring new, innovative ways to conduct the AOCC and achieving better results, the Chiefs of Ontario continues to work toward advancing our regional priorities to ensure First Nations voices are amplified. We are looking forward to continuing our vital work to advance our youth and communities.



# Staff of the Chiefs of Ontario

## Political Office:

**Sherry Antone**  
Chief of Staff to the  
Ontario Regional Chief

**Donna Simon**  
Policy Advisor to the  
Ontario Regional Chief

**Vanessa Ominika**  
Executive Assistant to  
Chief of Staff

**Shelley Stacey**  
Executive Assistant to the  
Ontario Regional Chief

**Joyce Hunter**  
Policy Analyst

**Rachel Arsenault**  
Policy Writer and Researcher

**Michelle Saravia-Richmond**  
Policy Writer and Researcher

## Secretariat Office:

**Tracy Antone**  
Chief Operating Officer

**Lori Keeshig-Martin**  
Executive Assistant to the  
Chief Operating Officer

**Ashley Nardella**  
Human Resources Officer

**Dianne Mishibinjima**  
Lead Coordinator

**Stewart Ense**  
Receptionist

## Finance Sector:

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Director of Finance

**Julie Altman**  
Finance Assistant

**Sandra Williams**  
Finance Assistant

## Education Sector:

**Denise Lofstrom**  
Director of Education

**Murray Maracle**  
Policy Analyst

**Holly Golabek**  
Senior Education Coordinator

**Angel Maracle**  
Policy Advisor

**Andrew Butko**  
Coordinator and Policy Analyst

**Alison Anderson**  
Policy and Research Analyst

**Patricia Magiskan**  
Special Education Support Technician

**Susan Deley**  
Special Education Support Technician

**Patrik Lowen**  
Senior Special Education  
Support Technician

## Environment Sector:

**Kathleen Padulo**  
Director of Environment

**Sally Gaikezhoyongai**  
Environment Coordinator

**Lillian Trapper**  
Ontario Regional Climate  
Change Coordinator

## Health Sector:

**Carmen Jones**  
Director of Health

**Lily Menominee-Batise**  
Senior Health Advisor

**Bernadette deGonzague**  
Senior Health Policy Analyst

**Linda Ogilvie**  
Public Health Advisor

**Alice Longboat**  
Senior Health Coordinator

**Cindy Owl**  
Health Coordinator

**Charnele Sondezi**  
Health Coordinator

**Miryan Rutledge**  
Southern NIHB Coordinator

**Jennifer Shisheesh**  
Northern NIHB Coordinator

**Emily King**  
Northern NHIB & Jordan's  
Principle Liaison

**Roseanne Sutherland**  
Research Manager

**Tia Pettit**  
Health Coordinator

**Carol Mulder**  
Senior Health Data Analyst

## Youth Sector:

**Megan Logan**  
OFNYPC Senior Coordinator

## Social Services Sector:

**Ruby Miller**  
Director of Social

**Fallon Andy**  
Policy Analyst

## Communications and Policy Sector:

**Scott Cavan**  
Director of Communications  
and Federal Affairs

**Barret Dokis**  
Director of Policy and  
Provincial Affairs

**Genna Benson**  
Communications Officer

# Map of the First Nations in Ontario



## Political Territorial Organizations

- Anishinabek Nation (UOI)
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN)
- Grand Council Treaty #3 (GCT#3)
- Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI)
- Independent First Nations (IFN)



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