



Session #3

Senior Medical Officer of Health Update:

Dr. Chris Sarin

March 16, 2023

13:30 - 15:00



Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

Canada

COVID-19

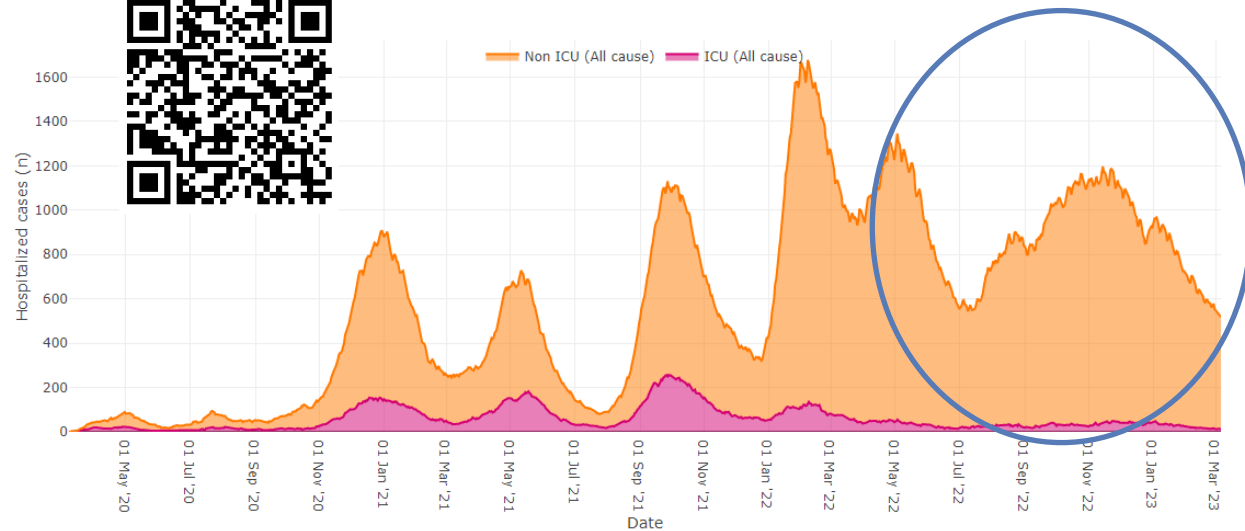


Figure 5: Number of current COVID-19 cases in hospital (ICU and non-ICU)

Severe outcomes:

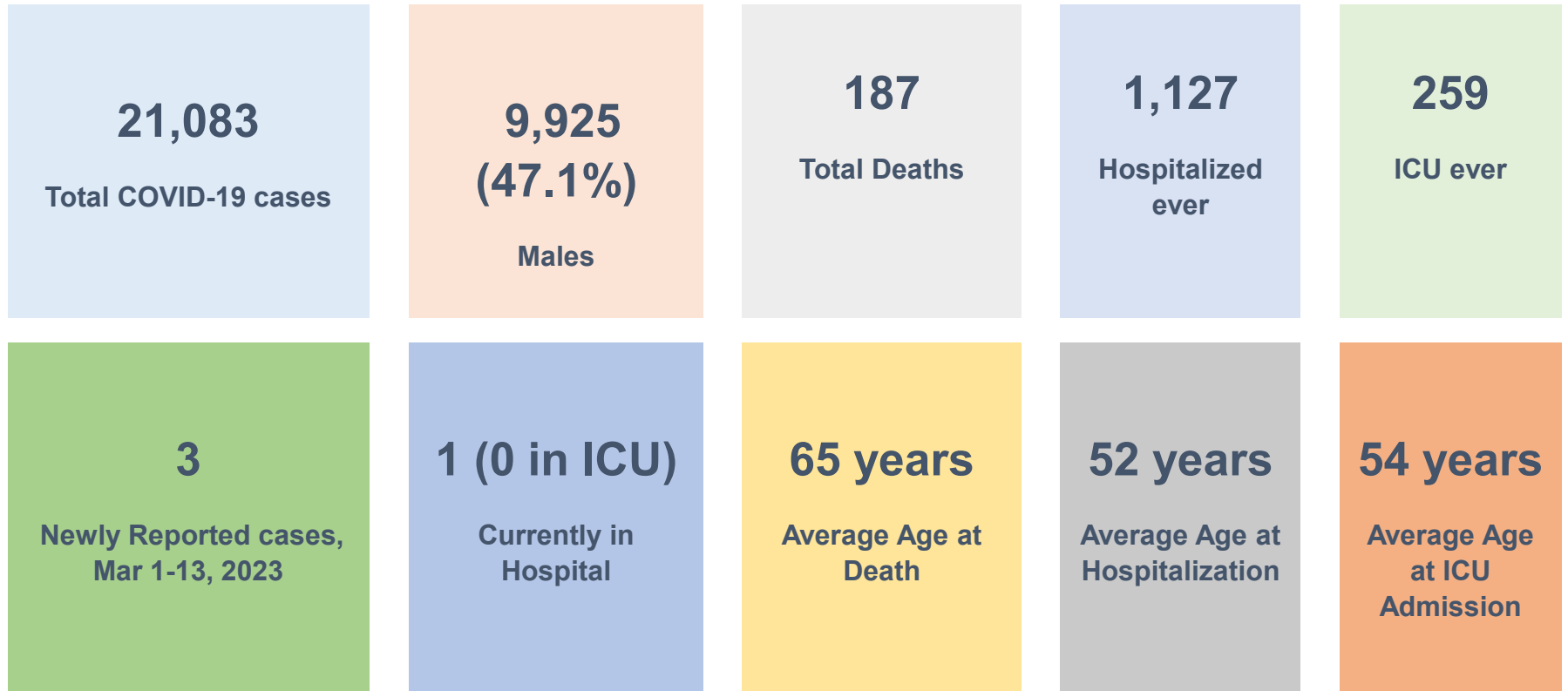
- Hospitalizations have been decreasing since November 2022.
- Still, hospitalizations remain high

Variants:

- As of early February, a subset of positive tests in Alberta will go through whole genome sequencing.
- Week of Feb 5-11: Of the tested samples, BQ subvariants made up 75% of tested samples, and the XBB.1.5 subvariant were 20% (both omicron).
 - XBB.1.5 is the prevalent variant in USA. Increasing slowly in Canada
 - Risk assessments of XBB are ongoing. Likely more transmissible, but not more severe.
 - Bivalent vaccine likely offers some protection against XBB.1.5 infection

Overview of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in First Nations Communities on Reserve in Alberta

Source: FNIHB COVID-19 ER System via Synergy in Action (March 13, 2023)

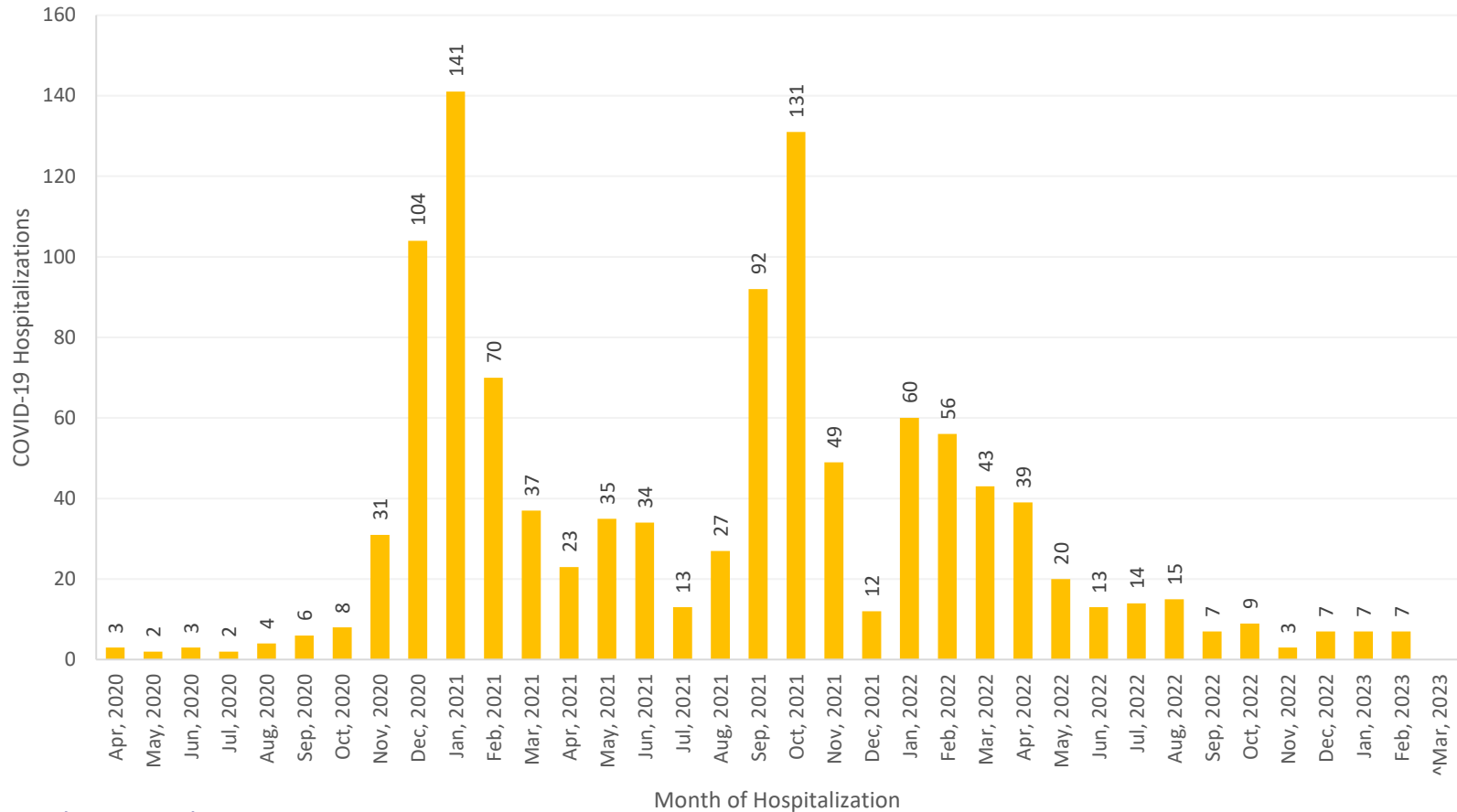


These do not include cases confirmed with only rapid antigen test in communities

COVID-19 Hospitalizations in First Nations Communities on Reserve by Hospitalization Month, March 12, 2023

Source: FNIHB COVID-19 ER System via Synergy in Action (March 13, 2023)

COVID-19 Hospitalizations in First Nations Communities by Hospitalization Month



^Data may be incomplete

Respiratory Viruses: Immunization

COVID-19

- Primary series is available is for ages 6 months and older.
- Bivalent boosters are available for ages 5+.
- Spring boosters: Will be targeted for high-risk individuals



<https://www.alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine.aspx>

Influenza:

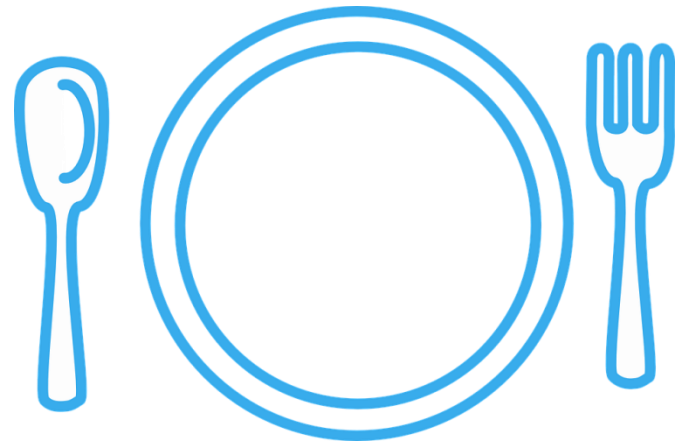
- Annual seasonal immunization is recommended for ages 6 months and older

It's not too late to get “fall” 2022 COVID-19 and influenza immunization

They are available at health centres and nursing stations

Food Security and Indigenous Food Sovereignty

Laura White, Regional Nutritionist - AB
First Nations and Inuit Health Branch
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Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

Canada

Alberta Nutrition Advisory Team

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch

Our team works directly with communities to support them in reaching their nutrition goals

Do not provide 1:1 counselling for clients

RD =
Registered
Dietitian

Food Security and
Team Lead

Laura White, RD

Regional Nutritionist

Treaty 7, YTC, Maskwacis Nations



Erin Bligh, RD
Nutrition Advisor

Athabasca Tribal Council, Western Cree Tribal Council

Vacant, RD
Nutrition Advisor

Kathleen Gibson, RD
Nutrition Advisor

Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council, Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council, Bigstone, Tribal Chiefs Ventures Inc.

Laurina Eskow, RD
Nutrition Advisor

North Peace Tribal Council, Paul First Nation, Enoch Cree Nation

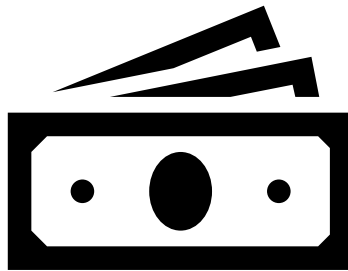
Prenatal and Infant,
Young Child Feeding

Chronic Disease
and Adult

School Age
Nutrition

Household Food Insecurity

"the inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so" (Davis B & Tarasuk V, 1994)



Why does HFI matter?

Food insecurity is associated with

Children

- Poorer development and learning
- Poorer mental health
- Impaired disease management
- Increased likelihood of developing asthma, depression and other chronic conditions
- Increased health care utilization

Adults

- Poorer mental health
- Increased probability of infectious and non-infectious diseases (diabetes, heart disease)
- Poorer disease management
- Increased health care utilization
- Higher mortality rates

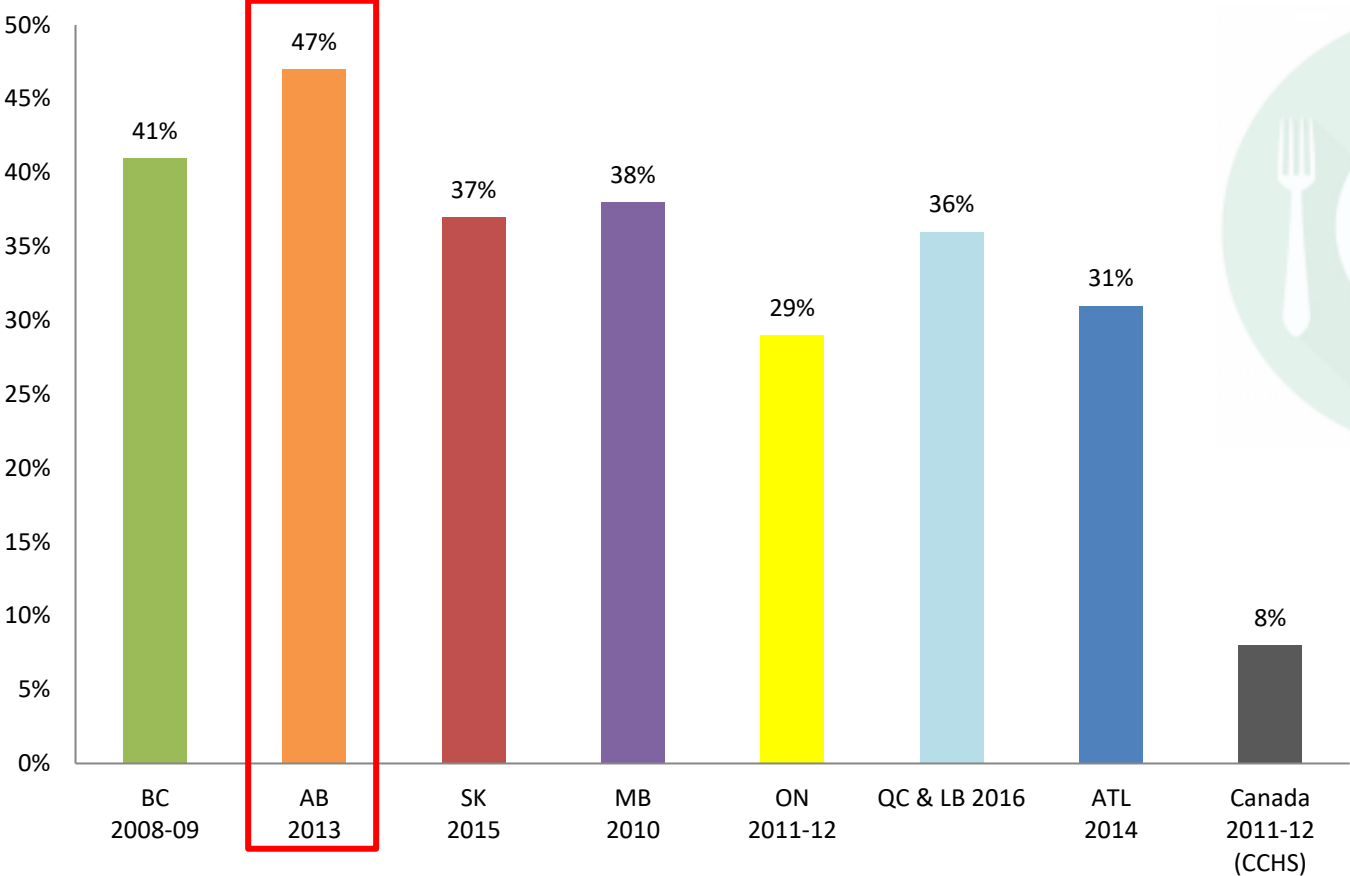
Sources:

PROOF, [What are the implications of food insecurity for health and health care?](#)

Canadian Nutrition Society, Household Food Insecurity in Canada, Part 1: Food, nutrition and health in the context of material deprivation

Household Food Insecurity in First Nation Communities

First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study



Almost **half** of all First Nation families have difficulty putting enough food on the table.

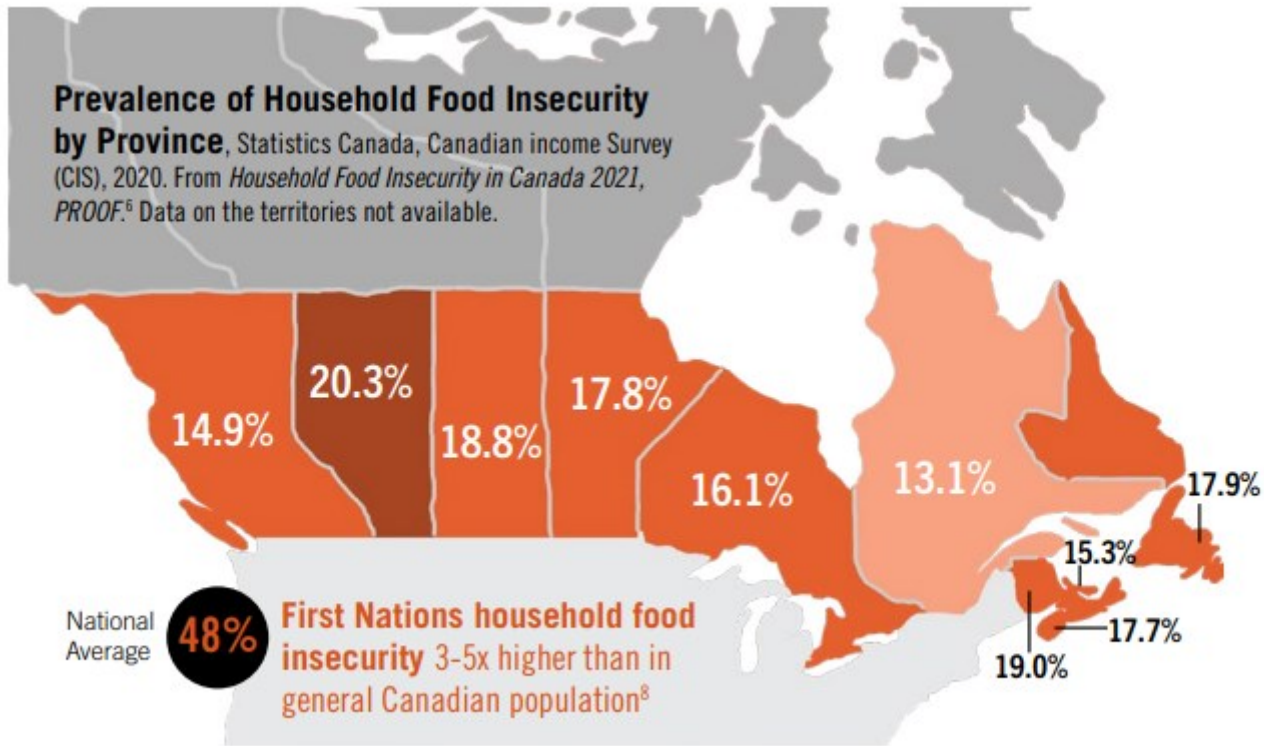
Report finds Albertans have highest rate of food insecurity in the country



More than 20 per cent of Albertans experience food insecurity: report



Mrinali Anchan · CBC News · Posted: Aug 23, 2022 7:00 AM MT | Last Updated: August 23



Percentage of households in Canada that are **food-insecure**



11.1% of
White

28.2% of
**Indigenous
off-reserve**

50.8% of
**First Nation
on-reserve**

Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2017-2018;
First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2018.

Factors Impacting HFI

Food security is complex and linked to many factors

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Available food and affordable prices• Employment options• Access to the land• Geographic remoteness/isolation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural identity• Traditional knowledge and food practices• The impact of environmental changes on food harvesting and consumption practices |
|--|---|

Colonization and systemic racism has impacts on many of these factors

- The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has impacted many of these factors negatively. Food insecurity has increased for First Nations in Alberta

Addressing HFI

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indigenous Services Canada provided unprecedented funding to address HFI through COVID-19 funding allocations. The focus was on emergency food supports:

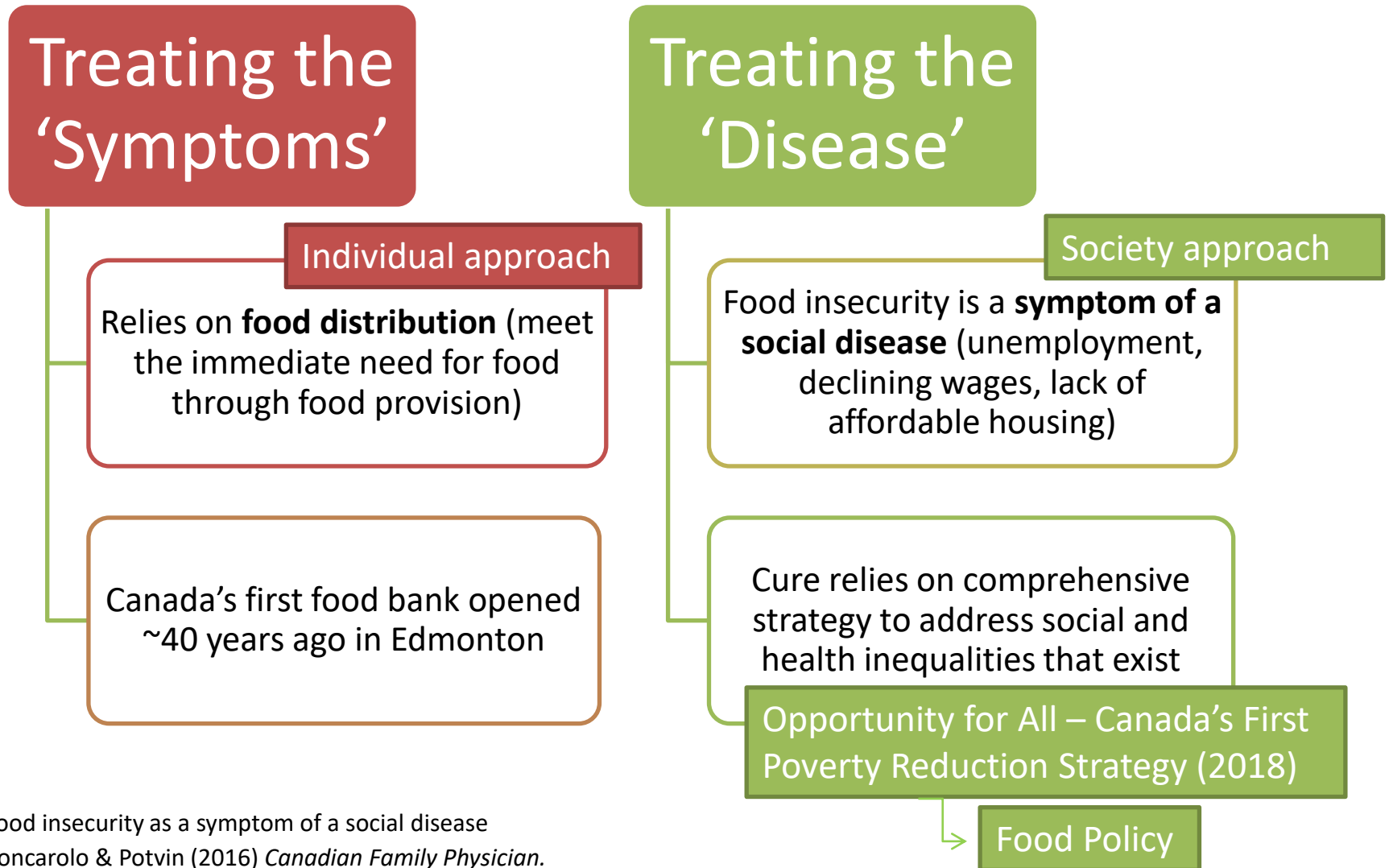
Indigenous Community Support Fund

- Funding to support all Nation members
 - Direction allocations could be utilized for food
 - Significant portion of proposal driven ICSF processes were for food supports

FNIHB COVID-19 Health Needs

- Funding for individuals isolating upon direction of medical professional

Strategies to address food insecurity



Food insecurity as a symptom of a social disease
Roncarolo & Potvin (2016) *Canadian Family Physician*.

Addressing Food Insecurity – National Food Policy

- Increasing access to affordable food was main theme during 2018 consultations with Canadians about creating a **National Food Policy**
- Among Indigenous respondents it was highlighted:

barriers to the consumption of country/traditional foods negatively impact health



supports are needed to establish a school nutrition program within communities



natural resource management practices that support the availability of traditional food



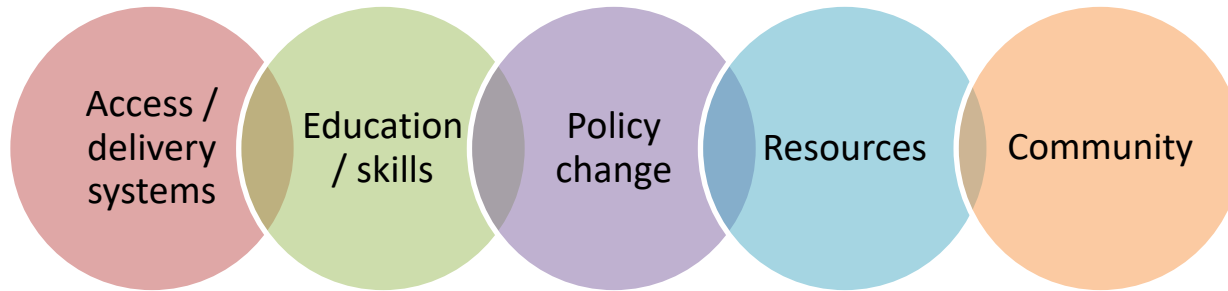
increased monitoring of the impacts of climate change are needed

greater support is needed for local food production (traditional foods and involvement in agriculture sector)

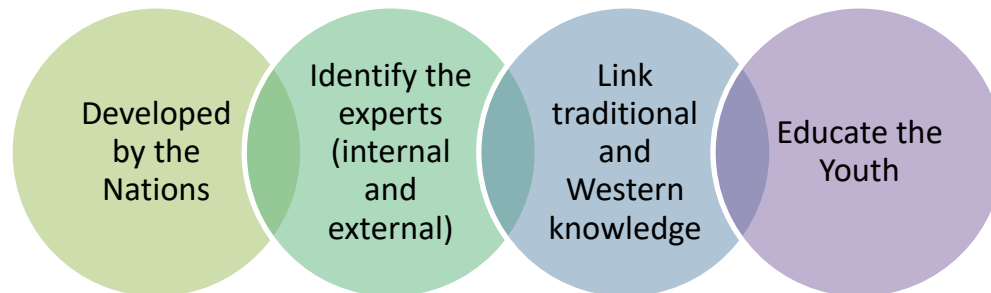


Alberta First Nations Food Security Work

1. Alberta First Nations Food Security Strategy (2015). Five themes identified were:



2. Elders' Food Sovereignty Declaration (2017); recommendations to increase access to traditional foods in community programs and facilities



Food sovereignty

“the right of peoples and governments to choose the way food is produced and consumed in order to respect livelihoods”

(La Via Campesina, 2009)

Self determination over food systems

First Nations in Alberta – Initiatives

- Many communities implementing innovative strategies to address food systems. Examples include:

Priority on school feeding & incorporation of traditional foods in schools

Band supported grocery stores, mobile food markets

Communities accessing funding to increase local food production (greenhouses, livestock, chickens)

Community gardens, Good Food Boxes, community kitchens

Increase in emergency food supports (food banks, community hampers) throughout COVID

Initiatives Shared Today

- Mayra Regan, Paige Thomsen, Josh Mark - Stoney Health Services nutrition and health promotion programming
- Clifford Gladue – Kee Tas Kee Now Education Authority Traditional Foods Program
- Em Shibley – Yellowhead Tribal Council Gardens (Growcer™ unit)

Stoney Nakoda Food Sovereignty

Stoney Healthy Services, Morley, AB



WATHTECH



Overview



1. **Stoney Nakoda Community**
2. **Stoney Health Services**
3. **Wathtech Development**
4. **Food Security Initiatives**

The Stoney Nakoda People



Culture:

- Hunting, Harvesting
- Mother Earth
- Language is a blend of Sioux & Assiniboine

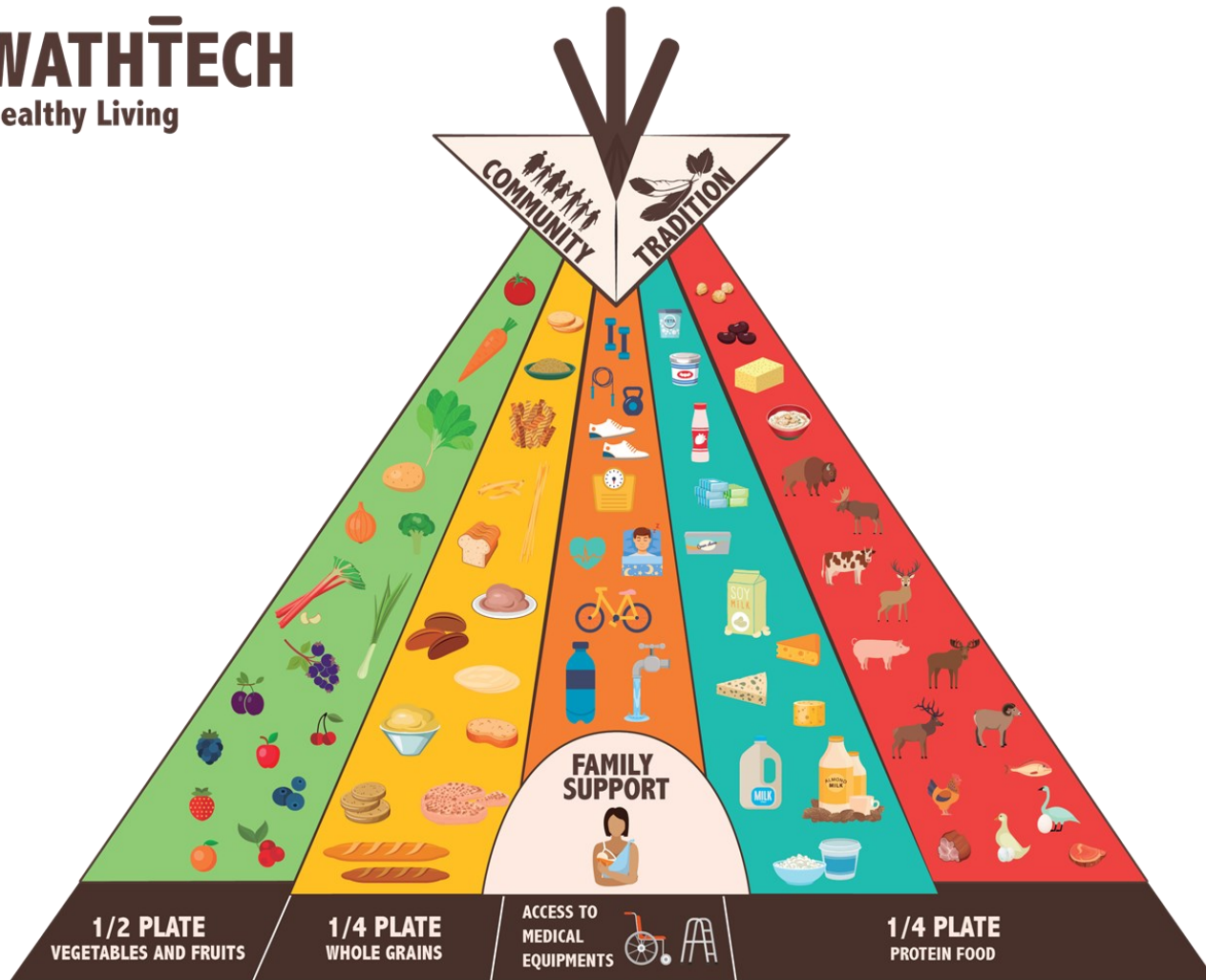
- Morley (Mini Thni), Eden Valley (Gahna), Bighorn (Kiska Waptân) Reserves

Stoney Health Services

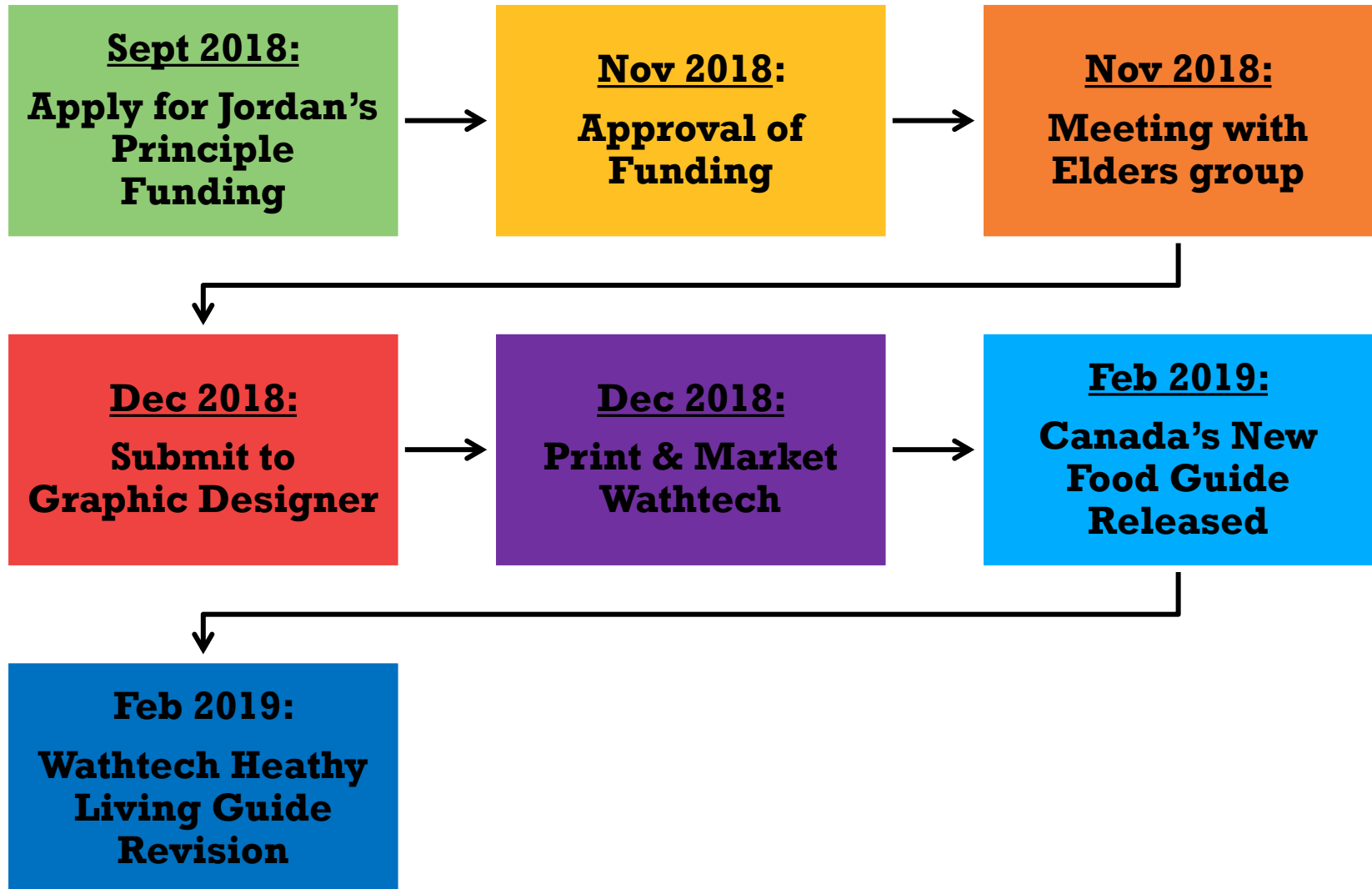


Stoney Nakoda Healthy Living Guide

WATHĒCH
Healthy Living

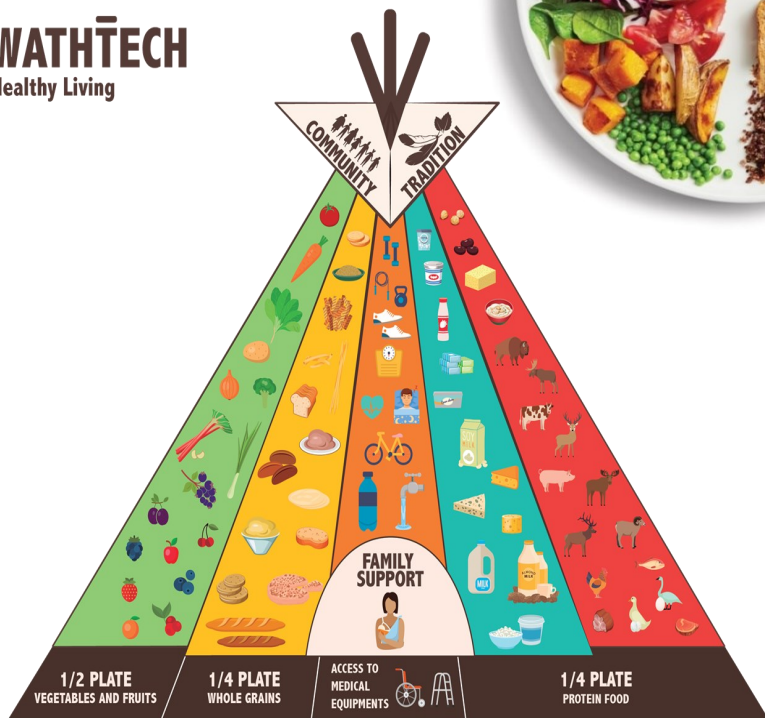


Wathtech Development



Healthy Living Guide Comparisons

WATHTECH
Healthy Living



Food Security Initiatives

Food Sovereignty Pillar	Program
Focuses on food for people	Good Food Program
Builds knowledge & skills	NSTEP (School) Adult Cooking Class
Works with nature	Food Forest & Greenhouse Ina Makoche
Values food providers	Project Thichachan
Localizes food systems & puts control locally	Mobile Butchering Project Thichachan
Food is sacred	Mother Earth Program Ina Makoche

Good Food Program & Mobile Market



Project Thichachan



Mother Earth Program



Ina Makoche



Greenhouse and Food Forest



Mobile Butchering



1
scholarship
with SAIT
for the
Butchery
and
Charcuterie
program

Wrote grant
for
Food Truck,
Butchery
Truck,
Refrigerated
truck, and
education

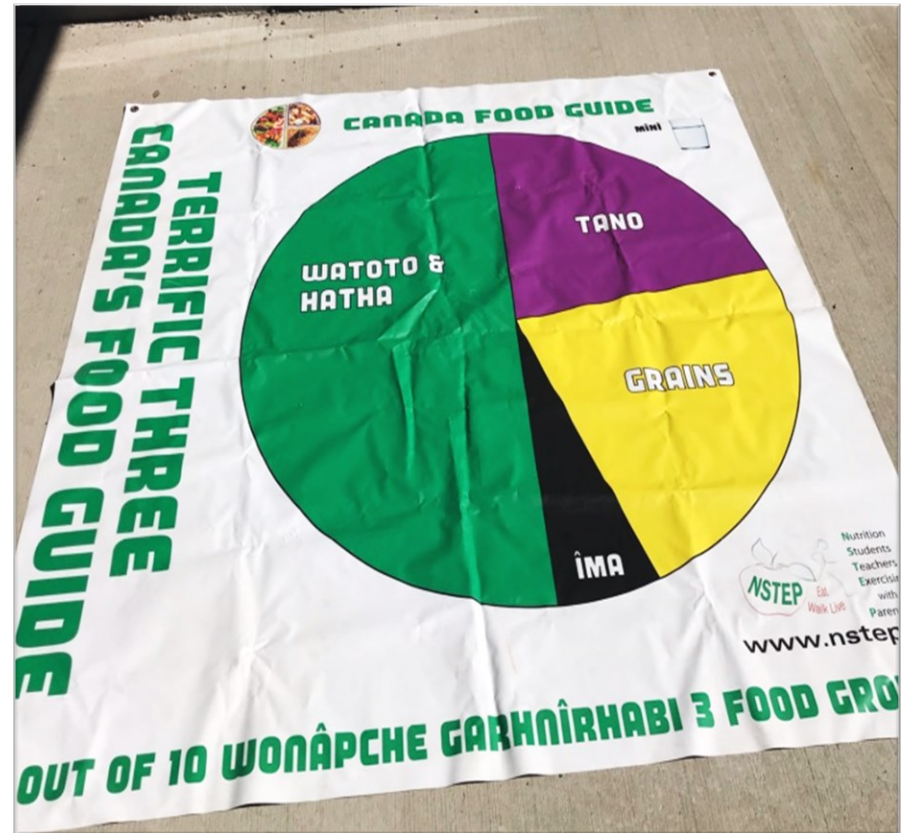
Adult Cooking Class



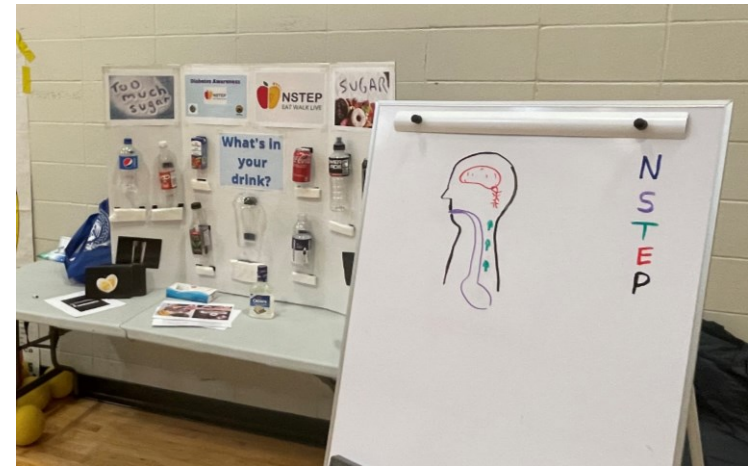
NSTEP



NSTEP



NSTEP



Is'niyes Thank you Questions?

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