

INFO BULLETIN

INFORMATION FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

National

Issue 151

February 2026

[Government of Canada announces renewed support for the 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline](#)

On January 16, 2026, the Government of Canada announced that it will invest up to \$120.2 million over the next two years to support the continued operations of the [9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline](#), a critical service for Canadians in distress. This is an important step to make sure Canadians can access suicide prevention support when they need it most.

Launched in 2023, the [9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline](#) is Canada's national, three-digit number for suicide crisis support. The [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\)](#) will continue to coordinate and operate the helpline in collaboration with 37 network partners across Canada, including local crisis lines, provincial mental health services, and national organizations such as [Kids Help Phone](#) and [Hope for Wellness](#).

For more information, please visit the [news release](#).

[Sexual health awareness resources toolkit](#)

With a focus on **sexual health this February**, we're encouraging people in Canada to:

- learn about safer sex
- get tested regularly for sexually transmitted infections (STI) if sexually active
- have open conversations about sexual health with partners and healthcare providers

To support these awareness efforts, we've created a [sexual health awareness resources toolkit](#) with ready-to-use content and materials that you can share, post or customize for your audience. You can also [order printed copies](#) of some of the posters and fact sheets at no cost.

Rates of STIs such as syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia have been rising in recent years. Cases of congenital syphilis, where syphilis is passed to a baby during pregnancy or birth, have also been increasing. Together, we can help empower people to take charge of their sexual health and protect themselves and their partners.

Sexual health is important. Let's talk about it. Visit [Canada.ca/STI](#) to learn more.

[2026 annual Award of Excellence in Nursing: Call for nominations](#)

The [Award of Excellence in Nursing](#) is presented to 3 exceptional nurses who provide care to First Nations and/or Inuit clients. Nominees will have demonstrated that they are committed to excellence in professional nursing practices serving First Nations and Inuit communities in Canada.

This award will be presented in a virtual ceremony during National Nursing Week. Recipients will be recognized in an online ceremony hosted by Indigenous Services Canada.

The call for nominations for the 2026 Award of Excellence in Nursing is now open until February 13, 2026 at 4 pm Eastern Time. All nominators and nominees will be notified in April 2026 of the results. We wish to thank everyone involved in the nomination process for taking the time to nominate an outstanding nurse providing direct front-line care in a First Nations or Inuit community.

For more information, including [eligibility](#) and [how to make an nomination](#), please visit the [2026 annual Award of Excellence in Nursing](#).

**HELP IS AVAILABLE
WHENEVER YOU
NEED IT.**

Immediate support is available 24/7
for all Indigenous people in Canada.

Hope for Wellness Help Line and Chat
1-855-242-3310 or [www.hopeforwellness.ca](#)

Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line
1-866-925-4419

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
and Girls Support Line
1-844-413-6649

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The call for proposals to support activities under the [First Nations and Inuit Summer Work Experience Program](#) is now open. Funding is provided to eligible First Nations and Inuit communities, governments and organizations; First Nations schools or federal schools on reserve; not-for-profit associations and more.

The deadline to submit a proposal is March 6, 2026, at 11:59 pm, Eastern Time.

[Call for proposals First Nations and Inuit Skills Link Program](#)

The First Nations and Inuit Skills Link Program is 1 of 2 programs under the [First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy](#). This program supports activities that assist First Nations and Inuit youth in gaining the essential skills to help them with gaining employment, performing effectively in workplace settings, and learning about job and career options. Activities can include career promotion, science and technology activities, co-operative education placements, internships and mentored work placements.

Funding may be provided to eligible First Nations and Inuit communities, governments and organizations; First Nations schools or federal schools on reserve; not-for-profit associations and more.

The deadline to submit a proposal is March 6, 2026, at 11:59 pm, Eastern Time.

For more information, including [eligibility](#) and [how to apply](#), please visit the [First Nations and Inuit Skills Link Program](#).

[Call for proposals to support innovation in Indigenous early learning and child care](#)

On January 14, 2026, the Government of Canada announced that First Nations, Inuit and Métis children have the right to access high-quality and culturally appropriate early learning and child care programs that reflect their languages, traditions and values. Nearly \$47 million of federal funding will be available for approved projects starting in 2026 to 2027. Funded initiatives can receive up to \$2 million with a maximum project duration of 36 months.

Funded projects will focus on at least one of the listed themes, which were co-developed with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners. Communities, governments and organizations are encouraged to **submit applications by March 25, 2026, at 3 pm, Eastern Time.**

For more information on how to submit a proposal, please consult the [Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Quality Improvement Projects funding web page](#).



SEXUAL HEALTH WEEK



Regional

[Province reminds Manitobans to check meningococcal vaccine eligibility following invasive meningococcal disease outbreak](#)

Public health officials are advising Manitobans of an elevated number of [invasive meningococcal disease](#) (IMD) cases caused by serogroup W since December 2023. Most cases have occurred in the [Northern Health Region](#) and have disproportionately affected Indigenous communities. Infants under 12 months old are most at risk, although cases have occurred in all age groups.

IMD is a very serious and potentially life-threatening bacterial illness. The disease can progress very rapidly and about 1 in 10 people with IMD do not survive. Receiving the Men-C-ACYW vaccine protects individuals from meningococcal disease and helps control the outbreak by reducing the number of people who carry the bacteria in the nose or throat. Ensuring everyone who is eligible gets vaccinated is important for reducing transmission and preventing new cases.

For more information, please visit the [news release](#).

[Manitoba government launches digital health card](#)

On January 12, 2026, the Province of Manitoba announced that Manitobans can now apply for and access a [digital health card](#) on their mobile devices. The digital health card allows Manitobans to securely carry [health card](#) information on their mobile device and present it when receiving care, reducing the need to carry a physical card. Manitobans can choose to request a plastic card, a digital card or both when they sign up, and those with existing paper or plastic cards can request a digital card at any time.

This modernization supports upcoming patient safety legislation, which will create a safer, more efficient patient experience, and give Manitobans greater confidence and autonomy in navigating the health system. The MB Wallet is available free of charge through the Apple App Store and [Google Play](#). Once downloaded, the app allows offline access to stored digital credentials. To protect privacy, users remain in control of when to use their credentials and what information they choose to share.

For more information, please visit the [news release](#).

[Additional \\$4 Million from U.S. liquor sales donated to children's health and nutrition](#)

On January 29, 2026, the Manitoba government announced that it is reinvesting an additional \$4 million from the sale of U.S. liquor products to the [Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba](#) and the [Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba](#), supporting critical services that improve children's health, well-being and access to care. Of the \$4 million, the province will donate \$3 million to the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba.

The remaining \$1 million will go to the Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba to support pediatric care, equipment and family-centred services that benefit Manitoba's sickest and most vulnerable children receiving care. The Manitoba government will continue to sell the remaining inventory of U.S. liquor products and donate the proceeds to charities across the province.

For more information, please visit the [news release](#).

[Province launches new five-year poverty reduction strategy](#)

On January 13, 2026, the Province of Manitoba launched a renewed five-year poverty reduction strategy grounded in the voices of Manitobans with lived experience and supported by concrete objectives to reduce poverty province-wide. The government has developed [Pathways Forward: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#), with input from more than 3,000 Manitobans, including community organizations, advocates, Indigenous Peoples, businesses and individuals.

Indigenous Peoples in Manitoba face unique challenges rooted in historical injustices, systemic discrimination and cultural disparities. It prioritizes cultural preservation and Indigenous-led approaches in a spirit of collaboration and reconciliation. Under the [Poverty Reduction Strategy Act](#), the government is required to maintain a long-term strategy and renew it every five years. The strategy must also be supported by measurable indicators.

For more information, please visit the [news release](#).