

QUEER & TRANS HEALTH COLLECTIVE STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2025



Land Acknowledgement

The QTHC is based in Amiskwaciwâskahikan (ᑭᑭᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ) within Treaty 6 territory, a traditional meeting ground and home of the Nêhiyaw (Cree), Denesuliné (Dene), Nahkawiniwak (Saulteaux), Niitsítapi (Blackfoot), and Îyârhe Nakoda (Nakota Sioux), as well as nations not represented by the treaty, and is located in Region 4 of the Métis Nation of Alberta. This territory is unceded land which was stolen from the First Peoples, and we recognize that colonization denies stewardship of this land through continued displacement and denial of sovereignty. Many of us settlers are uninvited guests occupying the traditional and contemporary homelands of these Nations. We are grateful to work on this land to improve the health and well-being of the queer & trans community alongside the Indigenous Nations who have called this place home since time immemorial. We commit to engaging in an ongoing process of decolonization, and will strive to conduct our work in an anti-oppressive and anti-racist way, working towards equity, empowerment, and inclusion for all Two Spirit, queer, trans, and non-binary people.



Welcome from the Board Chair

The QTHC (Queer & Trans Health Collective) is a quickly growing grassroots organization, that is for certain. In a few short years, the QTHC has expanded its programming, membership, and focus from queer and trans male identifying folks to encompass the broader queer and trans community as a whole. As our organization has helped create new support, research, and advocacy for one sector of the community, we want to ensure that moving forward we are utilizing our resources to do the same for the entire community.

The past six years, since BLM's protest of the Toronto Pride parade have shown that the "gay rights" movement must become a queer and trans rights movement. Sections of our community's population that have been pushed to the margins stood up and said, "no more, you're not moving forward without us." The QTHC hears that message and is committed to ensuring our value of "by community, for community" means by and for ALL of the community.

The strategy we have put forth in this plan was centred around anti-oppressive, decolonial, and equitable change strategies to guarantee that what we do in the next three years contributes to creating closer and stronger bonds within our community, so that we can be a source of strength, support, and resources as queer and trans folks navigate the broader health community experience.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Indigenous, trans, and racialized folks who, through our recent community consultations and within the organization itself, have proudly and firmly told us where we need to go and what we need to do to fulfill the promises we have made. The emotional, mental, and physical labour so generously given to helping the QTHC grow is greatly valued and appreciated.

As we move into and through the next three years, we look forward to continuing to grow, learn, and give back to a community that deserves everything we hope to create.

In Solidarity,

Clay Hitchcock (they/them)
QTHC Board Chair

Welcome from the Program Director

I have recently had the privilege and honour of joining the Queer & Trans Health Collective as Program Director and I couldn't be more excited! QTHC is an incredible organization and I firmly believe that the work we do to help queer and trans community members experience positive health and wellbeing is more important than ever before. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to give back to the community, *my* community. This is a particularly exciting time to join the QTHC as it embraces a new name to reflect the expanded scope of operations and increased inclusivity.

Over the next several years I'll do my best to make the goals outlined in this strategic plan a reality as QTHC continues to grow, expand and improve. I will work to ensure QTHC is fiscally and operationally stable, reflects the community we serve, and address the health needs of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Because these are goals worth striving for.

I look forward to seeing what QTHC becomes over the next three years and I hope you do, too.

In Solidarity,

Lea DuCoeur (she/her)
QTHC Program Director



About the QTHC

Who we are:

The Queer & Trans Health Collective (QTHC) is a non-profit organization run by and for community, in support of the health and wellness of the queer and trans community in Edmonton and area.

We are formerly known as the Edmonton Men's Health Collective (EMHC). The founders began to organize in July 2015 as a grassroots movement to holistically address gaps in health services for gay, bi, queer, and trans men in Edmonton, with the organization formally launching in April 2016. Over time it became clear that the programming and services being offered were valuable not only to gay, bi, queer, and trans men but to the larger queer and trans community in Edmonton and surrounding areas. Board membership and staff demographics began to shift and at the same time

program participant demographics evolved as well. The EMHC's vision and mission were reworked to be reflective of the overall population it was now serving. Towards the end of 2020, the organization began a process of community and stakeholder consultation to select a new name, ultimately choosing the name Queer & Trans Health Collective (QTHC) in 2021.

In addition to the evolution of the organization's vision and mission, QTHC has grown in its capacity to secure funding for scaled up and more sustainable work. In 2021, the organization brought on four full-time staff members. QTHC has also recently hired its first full-time Programming Director to oversee daily operations and serve as a liaison between board and staff.

QTHC Staff:

Lea DuCoeur (she/her), Program Director
Brendan Collinge (he/him), Knowledge Development & Exchange Coordinator
Finn St Dennis (they/them), Research & Evaluation Coordinator
Jess Murray (she/her), Peer N Peer Program Coordinator
QC Gu (he/they), Community Health Leadership Programs Coordinator
Steven Spurvy (he/him), Peer Outreach Worker
Tris Min (he/him), Peer Outreach Worker

QTHC Board:

Andres Filella He/him/his
Brooke MacCallum she/her
Clay Hitchcock they/them, Chair
Josh Armstrong he/him, Vice-Chair
Mel Willerth they/she
Rachel Babcock she/her
Ryan Au He/Him
Sai Vemula they/them, Secretary
Shawndy Kowalchuk She/Her
Terrence Adams they/them
Vinny Alfaro he/him, Treasurer



What we do:

The Queer & Trans Health Collective runs a range of programming and services to support the health and wellness of the local 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Since 2019, QTHC has been running **Peer N Peer**, a harm reduction program promoting safer substance use and informed sexual decision making designed to meet participants where they are at. The program offers harm reduction supplies, peer-based counseling, and service navigation support.

We just completed the third year of the **HEAL (Health Empowerment through Active Leadership) Program**, consisting of three programming streams which empower community members to build capacity and make connections. Investigaytors equips participants with community-based research skills which they then use to conduct an original research project. Pivot focuses on providing community members skills for advocacy and systems change, with which they develop a community intervention. In Do You Mind? participants learn about mental health promotion and design a project that supports community wellness.

QTHC maintains the **PrEP Alberta** website, which supports community members in accessing PrEP, as well as providing information to healthcare providers. QTHC is also a member of the **Trans Wellness Initiative**, which aims to provide community education and system navigation resources for trans and non-binary Albertans, as well as provider education and training.

The organization sustains partnerships with key stakeholders and health organizations, such as Alberta Health Services and the Public Health Agency of Canada, and is an active participant in the Alberta Health STBBI (sexually transmitted and blood-borne infection) Edmonton Zone Initiative and the Alberta STBBI Operational Strategy and Action Plan (OSAP).

This year, we undertook service mapping and capacity-building work within the local 2SLGBTQ+ sector. Additionally, we introduced a research scholarship to promote queer and trans led community-based research, and continue to pursue and support local research initiatives.

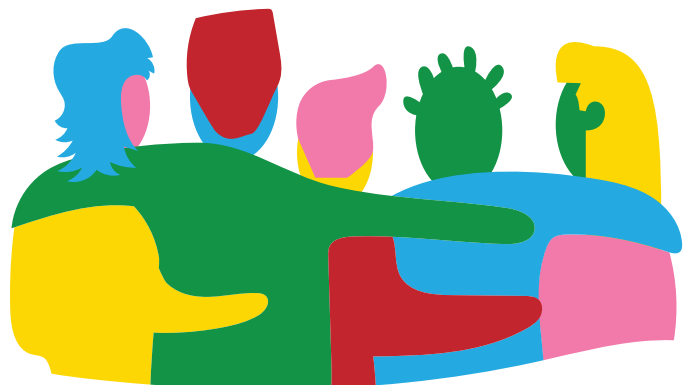
How we do it:

The Queer & Trans Health Collective was founded by community members in response to gaps they were experiencing in health programming and services, and the organization continues to operate under the same ethos today. We are grounded in being an organization that is run “By Community, For Community.” In practice, this means centring community voices in decision making. It means valuing lived experience as an important form of knowledge and expertise. It also means the QTHC strives to take an anti-oppressive and decolonial approach to all work.

Vision & Mission:

Our vision is for all queer and trans community members to have equitable opportunity to experience positive health and wellbeing.

Our mission: Working alongside our community, we empower queer and trans wellbeing through programming which promotes equitable access to health education, support, capacity building, community-based research, and provider training.



Goals:

In February 2022, the board and staff of the QTHC came together for a strategic planning retreat. In the lead up to this retreat, we conducted an extensive internal organizational review, met with stakeholders, and gathered community input. Following the retreat, five goals emerged which will guide our work over the next three years.

These goals are designed to support us in achieving our vision and mission.

By 2025 the Queer & Trans Health Collective seeks to achieve the following:

Goal 1:

We embody the QTHC name by ensuring our leaders and programs reflect the diversity of our community.

Goal 2:

The ethos "By Community, for Community" guides our work.

Goal 3:

Our programs expand to address the needs of the 2SLGBTQ+ community in all aspects of health.

Goal 4:

We have internal stability, capacity and cohesion.

Goal 5:

We have diverse, reliable funding which ensures organizational sustainability.



In addition to identifying goals, we also determined how we will measure the success of each goal by 2025.

1

GOAL 1: We embody the QTHC name by ensuring our leadership and programming reflect the diversity of our community.

We know we have been successful by 2025 if:

1. Decision makers and frontline staff are representative of those receiving services.
2. Programming demographics have continued the trend of reaching more 2S, QTBIPOC, women/femme-identified, and trans/non-binary populations, and programming is delivered with equitable access in mind.
3. Our community says they see themselves reflected within the organization.
4. Our community partners are broad and inclusive.

2

GOAL 2: The ethos “By Community, for Community” guides our work.

We know we have been successful by 2025 if:

1. We have and follow a community consultation policy.
2. We have and follow knowledge translation and exchange processes, ensuring the learnings from our research and programming are shared directly with the community in a timely manner.
3. We release an annual report to members and the community, ensuring accountability and transparency.
4. We have scaled up community-driven interventions through the HEAL and Peer N Peer programs, with paid community members overseeing this work, to deliver 6 distinct interventions.

3

GOAL 3: Our programs expand to address the needs of the 2SLGBTQ+ community in all aspects of health.

We know we have been successful by 2025 if:

1. We have developed additional mental health programming, which has seen measurable uptake from the community.
2. We have participated in at least one awareness campaign or healthcare provider training program.
3. One or two pilot programs will have expanded into longer term funding.
4. We have a better understanding of what our community’s health needs are.



4

GOAL 4: We have internal stability, capacity and cohesion.

We know we have been successful by 2025 if:

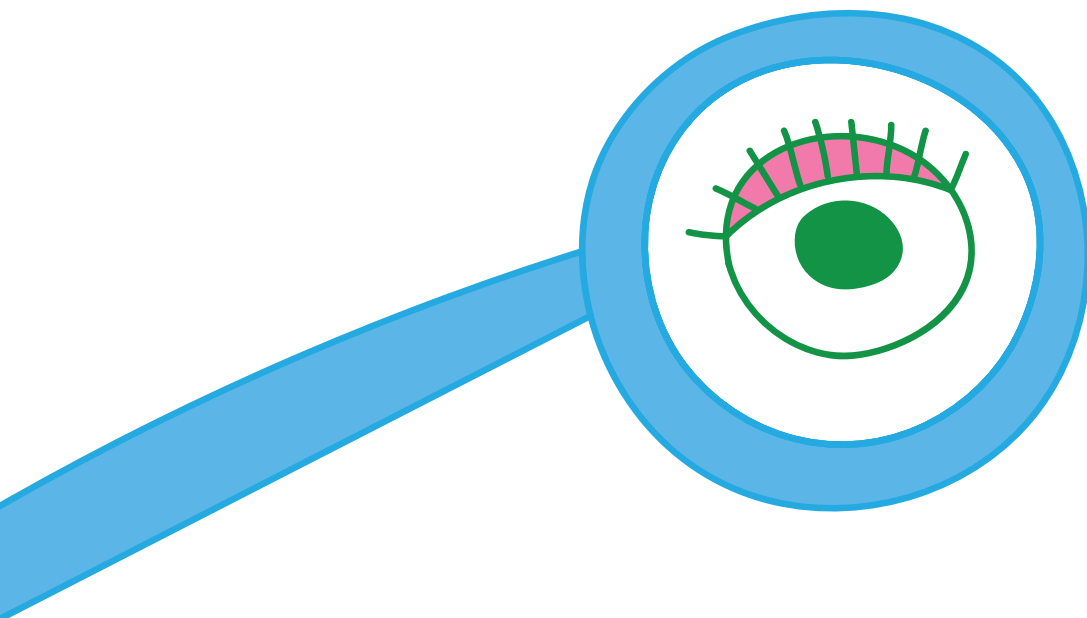
1. We have developed a cohesive policy handbook that addresses community, staff, and organizational safety. Specific guidelines for each program have been developed.
2. The roles and responsibilities of the board and staff are clearly defined. Board agendas and discussions are related to governance.
3. Clear communication channels have been established, facilitating collaboration and ensuring concerns can be addressed in a timely manner with the appropriate individuals.
4. Board, staff, and community say that conflict is resolved in a timely, constructive, and respectful way.
5. Staff and board members say the workplace is respectful, healthy, collaborative, and efficient, and they feel like a team working together.
6. We have annually reviewed the strategic framework and updated priorities and implementation accordingly.

5

GOAL 5: We have diverse, reliable funding which ensures organizational sustainability.

We know we have been successful by 2025 if:

1. We have diversified funding by:
 - a. applying for a diverse range of granting opportunities beyond STBBIs;
 - b. securing new types of funders in each category: government, private industry, community foundations, and direct donors; and,
 - c. increasing our overall number of funding sources.
2. We maintain financial sustainability, operating with a budget in line with or modestly above the 2023 budget.
3. Our contingency fund has grown in line with targets determined by our reserve policy, which we will have developed.
4. We have established an effective, centralized internal tracking system for reporting data which staff are confident using.



Towards an Equitable, Healthy Queer and Trans Community:

The Queer & Trans Health Collective's Strategic Plan for 2023-2025 is the foundation for our work over the next three years as we strive towards equitable health and wellbeing for all members of the queer and trans community. It is grounded in the lived experience of the community members we work alongside, as well as our own experiences as members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. It also serves as a commitment to transparency and accountability to all those we work with.

This is valuable and important work, but we cannot accomplish it without the support of our community and partners. We invite you to join us in making Edmonton and area a place where all queer and trans folks can experience wellness.

