

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre

2024-2025 Annual Report



Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
Centre

Exceptional **care** for
every patient, every time.

Message from the Board Chair and the President and CEO



Hello, Boozyhoo, Bonjour.

As we move into the third year of our *Strategic Plan 2026*, our commitment to patient-centered care remains unwavering. Every day, our staff, professional staff, learners, and volunteers work with empathy, compassion, and respect to support a better Patient Experience.

This year, with this commitment, we are advancing strategies to better integrate patient feedback to enhance care. In doing so, we became the first hospital in Ontario to introduce a text-message-based patient experience survey. This approach is enabling us to gather real-time feedback into our practice that will directly shape how we deliver care.

Bringing care closer to home continues to be a priority. The development and advancement of our cardiovascular surgery is a major milestone for Northwestern Ontario. This program will fill a long-standing service gap, support earlier diagnosis and treatment, and allow patients to stay in the region for care. This program also includes the latest in advanced imaging, catheterization labs, and surgical equipment, while enhancing clinical capacity.

Delivering safe, high-quality care also means being culturally responsive. Our staff, leaders, and board members have taken part in cultural safety training to deepen their understanding of the experiences of Indigenous Peoples and ensure care reflects the values and rights of all patients.

We are also working to reduce stigma in health care, particularly for patients living

with mental health and substance use challenges. Our Hospital-wide campaign helps staff recognize how stigma shows up and what actions they can take to improve care.

Quality in health care involves delivering safe, effective, patient centred care. As guided through our Integrated Quality Framework, more than 50 teams now run regular Quality Huddles. The conversations held are helping to identify issues, share solutions, strengthen safety, and implement best practice and innovations. Since 2023, they have generated over 2,500 change ideas resulting in improvements across the organization.

Ultimately, at its core, health care is about people. The people we care for and the people who work at our Hospital. Whether on the front lines or behind the scenes, every team member contributes to a positive and respectful care environment. Together, through our collective efforts, we are creating an environment where there is empathy, compassion and respect in every encounter - supporting our vision of *exceptional care for every patient, every time*.

Patricia Lang

Board Chair, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre

Dr. Rhonda Crocker Ellacott

President and CEO, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre

CEO, Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute

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(as of March 31, 2025)

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Message from the Chief of Staff/ Medical Advisory Committee



Reflecting on the past year, it's clear that the dedication of our frontline and professional staff continues to drive us toward our vision of *exceptional care for every patient, every time*. While capacity challenges tested our resilience, the proactive efforts of our teams have reinforced the strength and impact of their work. We remain committed to building on this progress, embracing challenges as opportunities, and continuously improving the quality of care we deliver.

This year brought significant pressures, including increased care needs and high volumes during flu and respiratory illness season. Effective capacity management and patient flow are critical to ensuring positive patient experiences, safe care, and efficient use of resources. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of the Patient Flow team, Hospitalists, Clinical Decision Unit, and Allied Health professionals, we've made important strides in streamlining admissions and discharges. This has led to measurable improvements, including shorter hospital stays for many patients.

As Chief of Staff, I'm proud of the progress we've made in optimizing resource deployment and patient flow across care areas. By leveraging technology and real-time data, we've improved coordination and efficiency—ensuring timely care that meets the needs of our entire network and results in better outcomes for patients.

Providing exceptional care also means reflecting and embracing the diversity of our team and the communities we serve. Diversity is core to our mission—it enables us to learn, grow, build trust, and deliver more inclusive care.

We've made meaningful progress on our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives across TBRHSC. One highlight is the integration of Wake the Giant Indigenous Culture and Inclusivity Training, first launched in the Emergency Medicine Department and Hospitalist program. This mandatory training addresses anti-Indigenous racism while promoting awareness of Indigenous culture, history, and traditions. Ensuring cultural safety allows us to deliver health care that is respectful, responsive, and equitable for all patients.

Creating an inclusive environment strengthens our connection to the communities we serve and enhances our ability to provide empathetic, high-quality care for all.

Teamwork is the foundation of everything we've accomplished. I want to sincerely thank our staff, professional staff, and partners for your unwavering commitment. Together, we continue to navigate a complex health care environment with resilience and purpose—keeping patients at the centre of all we do.

As we complete the third year of *Strategic Plan 2026*, I'm confident we'll continue building on our success, overcoming challenges, and positively impacting lives. Thank you for your dedication and hard work.



Dr. Bradley Jacobson
Chief of Staff,
Thunder Bay Regional Health
Sciences Centre

Message from the Co-Chair, Patient Family Advisor Council



At Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, patients remain at the centre of everything we do. This philosophy forms the foundation for practice at every level and is clearly evident as we continue the implementation of *Strategic Plan 2026* in year three. Implementation of the plan is on track in all five strands including Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Patient Experience, Staff Experience, Research, Innovation & Learning and Sustainable Future.

Patient and Family Centred Care continues to evolve using co-design, giving patients input in planning for their treatment as well as all Hospital activities. Congratulations and thank you to both the Patient Family Advisors (PFAs) and professional staff for their efforts in this area, ensuring that the patient will continue to be at the centre of all we do.


Closer-to-home cardiac care will soon become a reality as the funding from the Ministry of Health is in place and construction has begun. Our anticipated completion date is in 2027. While there will be some disruption in parking and entrance to our Hospital, the new cardiovascular surgery program will be well worth the wait, providing the cardiac care patients in Northwestern Ontario need without having to leave home. Let the countdown begin!

As patients, we are grateful to our leaders, physicians, clinical and support staff for the outstanding commitment and dedication they have demonstrated throughout the past year. As I read

the stories posted on our walls during Nursing Week recently, I was struck by the countless stories of compassion, kindness and sacrifice by our staff. They truly give credence to our philosophy that patients are at the centre of all we do!

As PFAs, the last year has been marked by continued enthusiasm and passion as we meet together to bring the patient experience to all we do at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. We are excited by our Revitalization Plan, along with recruitment efforts that has brought 20 new PFAs to our Council. Thank you to my fellow PFAs and the Patient and Family Care leadership team for all the work they have done over the past year – truly incredible! Your continued participation makes a huge difference to the patient experience at our Hospital.

This past year has made me incredibly proud to be a part of such an outstanding organization. As we move into the next year, I am excited by the continued sense of purpose exhibited by staff, professional staff, learners and volunteers at TBRHSC. I look forward to the next year as we continue implement our vision of *exceptional care for every patient, every time*.



Paul Carr
Co-Chair, Patient Family
Advisor Council,
Thunder Bay Regional Health
Sciences Centre

Message from Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation



How Donors Improved the Patient Experience This Year

It's a new era of Patient Experience – and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation donors are at the centre of it all!

Your donations, participation in Health Sciences Foundation events, and purchase of Thunder Bay 50/50 tickets provided millions in funding for Hospital projects this fiscal year, improving health care for tens of thousands of people across Northwestern Ontario.

Here are a few of the many highlights this year:

- MRI upgrade – essentially a brand new MRI at a fraction of the cost
- Sterilizing equipment and integrated operating bed to support the new da Vinci Robotic Surgical System for safer surgeries and better outcomes
- Renovation costs for a third LINAC to provide radiation therapy for a growing number of cancer patients
- Ventilator and defibrillator to complete a second Paediatric

Transfer Deck – made possible by Giving Tuesday donations

- New laser for the Lions Vision Care Centre – purchased by a generous donor to provide urgent, sight-saving eye care closer to home
- Over 70 projects funded through the Family CARE Grant Program, empowering frontline staff to bring their ideas for patient care improvements to life

Health Sciences Foundation staff works hard to show you these advances in Patient Experience up close through videos, images, and news articles. This year is unique though because we all get to watch one of our largest programs ever being built: the new cardiovascular surgery (CVS) program.

Some thought it may not happen. But we never lost sight of the end goal of bringing full cardiovascular surgical services to Thunder Bay so more patients can get the care they need, right here at home. It's another, very visible way your support helps improve the Patient Experience every day!

We'd like to thank everyone involved in raising funds for this project. The Our Hearts at Home Cardiovascular Campaign cabinet headed up by Paul Fitzpatrick. Foundation staff for their dedication and commitment to fostering community support. Countless volunteers at fundraising events

in support of the CVS program and cardiovascular care. And of course, you and all our generous donors who believe in the importance of bringing closer-to-home cardiovascular surgery here to Thunder Bay.

If you've made a donation, attended or volunteered at a Foundation event, or bought a Thunder Bay 50/50 ticket in the last 10 years, you have helped bring the CVS program to the region. The construction of the CVS program in the Hospital parking lot is a physical symbol of your generosity and dedication to better health care, closer to home.

Now that construction is in full swing, everyone at the Foundation will be working hard on the Our Hearts at Home Cardiovascular Campaign and making our shared dream of closer-to-home cardiac surgery a reality.

Thank you!

Dr. Stephen Adams
Chair, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation Board

Glenn Craig
President & CEO, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation





Paediatric Emergency Transport Team in Motion Across Northwestern Ontario

A new team dedicated to transporting neonates and infants has started performing patient transfers at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC). In collaboration with the existing provincial transport teams and ORNGE, TBRHSC's Paediatric Emergency Transport Team (PETT) is drastically improving access to care and reducing wait times for patients in communities across Northwestern Ontario, so they can receive the emergency care they need as fast as possible. Prior to establishing this team, infants in need of emergency care had to wait at hospitals or health centres for transport teams from southern Ontario or Manitoba to be transferred to Thunder Bay or other

tertiary centres. TBRHSC's dedicated team will have a positive impact on timely access to care for infant patients across Northwestern Ontario – particularly for remote and First Nations communities – and will help save the lives of some of Ontario's youngest patients. "This dedicated transport team provides specialized care that supports the unique care needs for the paediatric population of Northwestern Ontario," said Dr. Rhonda Crocker Ellacott, President and CEO of TBRHSC, CEO of Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute. "This vital service will improve health outcomes for newborns and infants requiring urgent or emergent care when transport to a tertiary care centre is needed."

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Recognized for Excellence in Renal Care

Ontario Health (Ontario Renal Network) has recognized the North West Regional Renal Program at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) for its commitment to excellence in care for renal patients. "I would like to thank the dedicated North West Regional Renal Program team for all of their hard work and the progress

they have made," said Dr. Rhonda Crocker Ellacott, President and CEO of TBRHSC and CEO of Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute. "This team exemplifies our commitment to patient experience, with their focus on high quality care, and improving coordination and support for patients with chronic kidney disease."

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Ontario Expanding Access to Cardiac Care in Thunder Bay

The Ontario government is celebrating a key milestone connecting more people in Thunder Bay and across Northwestern Ontario to life-saving cardiac care by awarding the construction contract and investing over \$93 million to build the new cardiovascular surgery

program at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. This new funding builds on the over \$5.7 million the government has previously invested to support early planning and design for this transformational project.

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Taking the Pledge Against Substance Use and Addiction Stigma

Health care staff and the leadership team at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) came together today to celebrate the launch of an anti-stigma campaign designed to bring awareness to and break down the stigma associated with substance use and addiction. "All individuals with addictions and substance use disorder deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. This campaign will help bring awareness to the negative stereotypes and barriers created by stigmatization," said Adam Vinet, Vice President of Patient Experience and chief Nursing Executive, Regional Vice President, Regional Cancer Care at TBRHSC. "Our words

and actions matter. Outdated language around addictions and substance abuse continues to be used in conversations, and this can be a barrier to breaking down stigma. It is our responsibility to advocate for change and reduce stigma to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment for all staff, patients, and their families." As part of the Patient Experience pillar of Strategic Plan 2026, the Anti-Stigma Campaign will define what stigma is within TBRHSC and provide education on the appropriate tools and strategies to ensure staff provide exceptional care to every patient facing mental health and addictions.

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2024 Quality Huddle Excellence Awards

Implemented in January 2023 by the Quality and Risk Management team at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC), Quality Huddles are departmental, leader and staff-led touch-points that provide a consistent platform for sharing innovative ideas related to safety and quality trends. What started with just seven clinical departments, has since expanded to over 50 departments (including non-clinical and outpatient areas) at TBRHSC; with further expansion underway. To date, there have been significant milestones achieved with over 1,400 huddles

held, over 11,000 staff in attendance, over 1,700 change ideas generated, and over 1,000 change ideas implemented. Thank you to everyone who attended the inaugural Quality Huddle Excellence Awards on October 17, 2024. More than 100 staff members from over 30 departments came together to celebrate the various quality improvement initiatives that have made a significant impact on Safety, Staff Experience, Team Work and Collaboration, Workflow Improvement, and Patient and Family Centred Care.

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2024-2025 Annual Report

Unveiling of Robinson Superior Treaty Plaque at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre

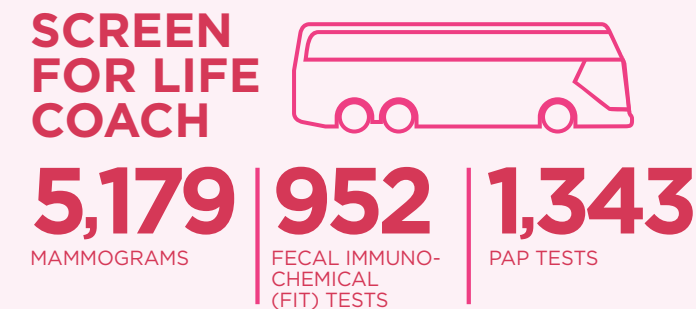
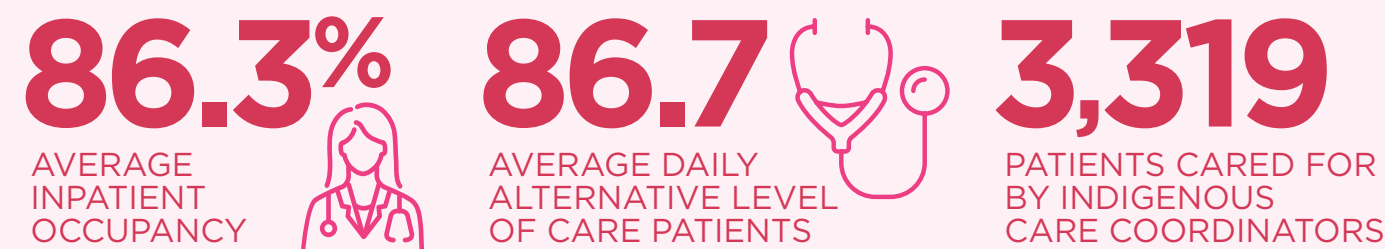
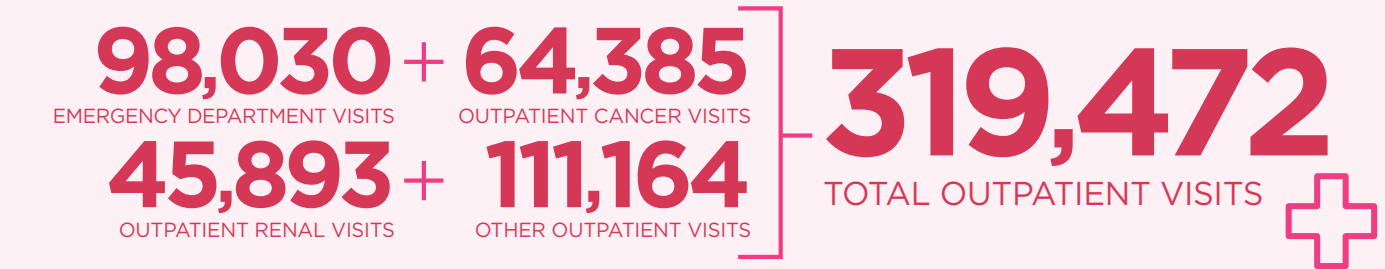
Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre proudly unveiled the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850 plaque. This permanent plaque honors the ancestral lands of Fort William First Nation and the First Nation communities within the Treaty area to

reaffirm our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. It stands as a powerful symbol of our respect for Treaty relationships and our dedication to Call to Action #10 (vii), marking an important step toward a more collaborative future.

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2024-2025 By the Numbers

ADMISSIONS & STATS



Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) is a 425-bed acute care facility and academic health sciences centre. As the only tertiary health care provider in the region, our Hospital provides comprehensive care to more than 245,000 people in a region the size of France. TBRHSC teaches the next generation of health care providers and advances medical research through the Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute (TBRHRI). Patients benefit from interprofessional teams of dedicated health care providers and access to leading-edge medical technology and clinical trials. TBRHSC is proudly affiliated with Lakehead University, Confederation College and NOSM University.

TBRHSC operates on Sacred Land. We respectfully acknowledge that we work on the traditional lands of the people of Fort William First Nation. This land is the territory of the Anishinabek Nation and is home to the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850. Today, Thunder Bay is the home to many Indigenous Peoples from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work together in this community and on this territory.

We are committed to embedding equity, diversity and inclusion in all the care, education and research that we do. We believe that our differences are key to our growth as an organization and a community, and to our ability to develop innovative approaches to deliver exceptional care to every patient, every time.



STRATEGIC PLAN



Exceptional care for every patient, every time.

For the first time ever, *Strategic Plan 2026* is a joint plan for Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) and Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute (TBRHRI). As the inaugural joint strategic plan, it is the foundation on which significant progress in patient care and health research will be made. This plan was built on extensive engagement with patients, families, the public, volunteers, staff and health service providers. Updated Mission, Vision and Values statements reflect the input received, while responses were clear that the organizations' philosophy needs to remain the same: patients at the centre of everything we do. TBRHSC is committed to upholding its position as a leader in Patient and Family Centred Care by introducing the principles of co-design into care planning to ensure care better reflects the needs of the patients and families. *Strategic Plan 2026* is an evolution that builds on the successes of the previous strategic plan, with focused strategic directions identified during stakeholder consultations, including Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion, Patient Experience and Staff Experience. A clear emphasis on Research, Innovation, & Learning will help prioritize and integrate research efforts, build research capacity and create an environment that better supports research, innovation, teaching, and learning. The strategic enabler Sustainable Future is critical to the organizations' financial health and future success, and includes supporting expansion of digital health, creation of a clinical services plan, advancing partnerships and system integration, and achieving operational sustainability. Through the next few years, the plan will be a base for continuous improvement, driven by the needs of the patients and families served, and the commitment to *exceptional care for every patient, every time*.

For a closer look at our Strategic Plan 2026, check out this video:



MISSION:

We provide quality care to patients and families, supported and advanced by research, innovation, and education that is responsive to the needs of the population of Northwestern Ontario.

VALUES:

DIVERSITY

We foster a people-centred environment that is inclusive of all.

COMPASSION

We show empathy, compassion and respect by acknowledging ourselves as learners in understanding the experiences of others, and by considering the needs, thoughts and feelings of those we serve and with whom we work.

EXCELLENCE

We deliver the highest quality service in every encounter and in all our work.

INNOVATION

We embrace continual learning and improvement to drive positive change.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We sustain and reinvest in our mission and communities by wisely planning for and managing our resources.

PHILOSOPHY:

Patients at the centre of everything we do.

VISION:



OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion
 We all belong

Patient Experience
 Empathy, compassion, and respect in every encounter

Staff Experience
 This is where we want to work, grow, and thrive

Research, Innovation, & Learning
 Driven by the needs of our patients, our staff, and our communities

Sustainable Future
Ensuring our Healthy Future

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

We all belong



WHAT WE WILL DO

Embed Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in everything we do.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

- Assess policies and procedures, using an equity lens.
- Create an Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Steering Committee.
- Recruit Indigenous staff.
- Identify opportunities for education and development of Indigenous individuals.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Provide a culturally safe experience for all patients and staff.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

- Provide cultural safety and equity, diversity, and inclusion training for all staff.
- Conduct a walk-through of the Hospital's physical environment with an equity lens.
- Implement the principles of the Truth & Reconciliation Call to Action.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE IT

- Increase staff engagement in cultural safety and equity, diversity, and inclusion training.
- Increase positive patient experience survey results related to their experience, views, and beliefs being acknowledged as part of care.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Physical Environment Review

This project aims to create a culturally safe environment. We plan to conduct a facility review with an EDI lens to identify gaps and determine areas for improvement. Our goal is to integrate EDI considerations into future space planning and assess the impact of current capital projects, reinforcing our commitment to an inclusive and equitable environment.

Indigenous Recruitment and Education

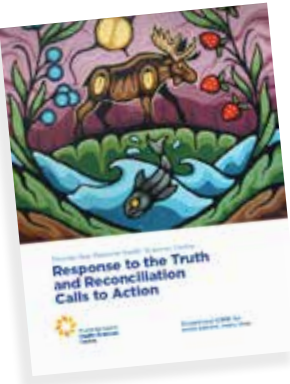
This initiative addresses the under-representation of Indigenous Peoples in health human resources (HHR) roles at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute. We will focus on recruitment for HHR positions, evaluate current practices, implement new strategies, and monitor progress. Insights gained will also enhance recruitment for volunteers, Patient Family Advisors, and other staff roles.

EDI Experience Sharing to Build Understanding and Respect

We are creating an EDI assessment tool for managers to evaluate and improve EDI practices within their teams. This tool will provide practical insights to support a more inclusive work environment, helping managers build a more equitable workplace.

Together, these projects help us foster a more inclusive and equitable environment for patients and staff.

Inaugural Report on Response to Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action



Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) commemorated National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by launching an inaugural report on the Hospital's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action.

"I am pleased to update the community on the work that our Hospital has

completed to advance truth and reconciliation. This report shows the work we have done to date through Strategic Plan 2026 and highlights our efforts to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action," said Dr. Rhonda Crocker Ellacott, President and CEO of TBRHSC, and CEO of Thunder Bay Regional Health Institute (TBRHRI).

"We will continue to apply the 94 Calls to Action as a lens to every decision we make as an institution, to ensure we deliver the highest level of compassion and inclusion to every patient, every time. We look forward to providing updates on this important work to the community annually."

[Click for full article](#)



Repairing the Sacred Circle

As we work to advance Indigenous Cultural Awareness for our staff, professional staff, learners and volunteers, Miskwaa Biidaaban - the Indigenous Collaboration, Equity and Inclusion portfolio - launched "Repairing the Sacred Circle: An Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Education Primer." Designed, developed and launched by N'doo'owe Binesi in 2022 with support and guidance of the Ogichidaa Onaakonigewin - Elders Council, the session introduces participants to an insightful way of thinking about Truth and Reconciliation. The training provides information on the key foundational concepts that have influenced the historical and current treatment of Indigenous Peoples in health care. It is a reflective pathway for cross-cultural discussion and an entry point to create the necessary change for awareness and inclusiveness within our Hospital and Research Institute. This regionally specific training aligns to the strategic direction "Providing a culturally safe experience for all patients and staff".

Indigenous Career Experience

In its fourth year, Indigenous Career Experience (ICE) aims to engage Indigenous youth by offering valuable insights into various career paths in health care and fostering a connection with Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC). A key component involves reaching out to high school students before they finalize their post-secondary career choices. By offering students the opportunity to be involved in hands-on learning, the program provides an opportunity for students to get excited about a future career in health care. It also facilitates the recruitment of Indigenous staff within the health care sector. ICE introduces Indigenous youth to Hospital operations and encourages them to consider volunteering opportunities. Over 60 students from school boards across Thunder Bay were on-site at TBRHSC to explore many different health care career and volunteer options. As part of the program, students experienced a day filled with tours, presentations,

and hands-on activities designed to provide them with an authentic feel of various health care roles. Students had the opportunity to interact with managers and staff, ask questions, and learn about the educational pathways required for various positions. Throughout the day participants had the opportunity to visit departments that included the Miskwaa Biidaaban (Indigenous Health Hub), Laboratory Services and Medical Device Reprocessing as well as participate in a clinical simulation and try different tools used in the Operating Room.

Indigenous Peoples may face challenges and barriers when accessing health care services or educational opportunities, particularly for those travelling long distances from their communities. By addressing these challenges and improving cultural safety, TBRHSC is striving to create an environment where Indigenous staff and patients can thrive.

[Click for full article](#)

Patient Experience

Empathy, compassion, and respect in every encounter

WHAT WE WILL DO
Treat each person with compassion, respect, and empathy.

- HOW WE WILL DO IT**
- Develop and implement the framework for co-design.
 - Embrace patient-centred communication principles.

WHAT WE WILL DO
Focus relentlessly on quality.

- HOW WE WILL DO IT**
- Develop an annual Quality Improvement Plan.
 - Incorporate quality best practices.
 - Review a summary of patient safety events.
 - Assess current services through the lenses of consistency, coordination, and transitions.

WHAT WE WILL DO
Become experts in caring for patients with complex care needs.

- HOW WE WILL DO IT**
- Improve coordination, care, and support for patients with complex health issues.
 - Develop a Substance Use and Addictions Strategy.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE IT

- Increase positive patient experience survey results.
- Improve quality of care and reduce preventable harm.
- Improve access, care, and support for patients with complex care needs in collaboration with our partners.



Coordination and Support for Patients Who Frequently Access Hospital Services

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC)'s Heart Failure Team and Outpatient Clinic have operationalized a team that connects patients who present to the Hospital with heart failure to a rapid access outpatient heart failure clinic. The clinic's focus is to optimize treatment and reduce risk of return to Hospital. Initially, patients are identified in the Emergency Department and seen by a nurse practitioner and physician to determine the best plan of care. Patients will have an appointment with a nurse practitioner within one-week post-Hospital visit. Within two to four weeks post-discharge, patients will have an appointment with a physician. The outpatient heart failure clinic operates once a week, with patients are seen for follow up on interventions initiated in the Hospital.

Through 2024 -2025, the heart failure clinic at TBRHSC saw **253** referrals and a decrease in repeat visits for heart failure from 24.2% in 2023-2024 to 18.8% in 2024-2025.

Clinical Decision Unit

To further support our capacity, we're excited to introduce a new model of care in the Emergency Department. Efficient patient flow and capacity management are critical for ensuring a positive patient experience, optimizing resources and providing quality care. Through the coordination of the Patient Flow team and the collective efforts of the Hospitalists, Clinical Decision Unit, and all Allied Health Care teams, there have been significant improvements to support patient flow both into and out of our facility. Teams have been working hard to transfer patients from the Emergency Department to a bed, and we are seeing great progress, resulting in a decreased length of stay for these patients.

Co-Design Development Building the Future Together

As part of the Patient Experience strategic priority in *Strategic Plan 2026*, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) has begun the design and implementation of a co-design framework. This framework aims to foster a shared understanding of co-design among staff, patients, and families, ensuring it becomes a cornerstone of how we deliver care.

A diverse committee of over 30 individuals—including frontline staff, physicians, administrative staff, and Patient Family Advisors (PFAs)—collaborated to craft a definition that reflects the values of TBRHSC.

Once the definition was finalized, the team developed a comprehensive framework to integrate co-design into the fabric of TBRHSC. This framework draws on Appreciative Inquiry and emphasizes person-centred communication principles, ensuring equity, relationship-building, and the inclusion of all voices. It establishes co-design as both a guiding philosophy and an actionable strategy for change.

The implementation of co-design spans two levels, macro- and micro-level co-design.

Macro-Level Co-Design: At the organizational level, co-design serves as a framework for large-scale projects and a change management tool. This structured approach ensures that initiatives across departments and programs are informed by the perspectives and insights of patients and families, creating a shared vision for improvement. The development of the macro-level framework has been completed, providing the foundation for this work.

Micro-Level Co-Design: At the bedside, co-design is about empowering patients to actively co-create their care. This involves applying person-centred communication principles to establish trust, foster mutual understanding, and ensure that care decisions reflect the unique needs and preferences of each patient. The micro-level work is now underway, focusing on embedding co-design into everyday interactions between staff, patients, and families.

By integrating co-design at both the macro and micro levels, TBRHSC is creating a culture where patients and families are truly equal partners in care.



Geriatric Emergency Management Nurses

At Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, the Emergency Department (ED) is supported by two Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) nurses. These specially trained registered nurses have expertise in geriatrics and conduct comprehensive assessments to identify risks such as cognitive impairment, functional decline, and social vulnerabilities. They work collaboratively with the interdisciplinary team to develop individualized care plans that support optimal patient outcomes and safe transitions from the ED.

GEM nurses also play a key role in educating patients, families, and health care providers on evidence-based geriatric care practices.

Additional responsibilities of the GEM nurses include:

- Supporting the implementation of standardized protocols to screen and refer high-risk older adults in the ED, including ongoing staff education and training.
- Conducting assessments to identify acute symptoms, underlying medical conditions, physical and cognitive functioning, emotional well-being, and home supports for at-risk seniors.
- Recommending and facilitating care plans for frail older adults within the ED and across Hospital services, including specialized geriatric programs.
- Helping to strengthen connections with community services such as primary care and Ontario Health at Home.

Contributing to the development of innovative solutions to improve patient transitions between the ED and community providers, including protocol development and education initiatives aimed at building system capacity.



Quality Huddles

As part of the Patient Experience pillar of our *Strategic Plan 2026*, one of the primary goals is to “Focus relentlessly on quality”. Quality Huddles was a corporate initiative that began in January 2023 and since that time we have evolved and expanded to both clinical and non-clinical areas. Quality Huddles is an avenue to share team successes, opportunities for improvement and discuss safety and quality issues. It is evident that this corporate initiative is providing a forum where all staff can feel they are contributing to our safety culture and driving quality work within all areas. In 2024/2025, Quality Huddles expanded to 58 departments.

The inaugural Quality Huddle Excellence Awards was held on October 17, 2024. Over 100 staff members from more than 50 departments came together to celebrate the various change ideas/quality improvement initiatives that have made a significant impact on Safety, Staff Experience, teamwork and collaboration, workflow improvement and promote Patient and Family Centred Care.

A special congratulations goes out to all the award winners who came forward to share their valuable change ideas and the innovative initiatives from various departments who implemented Quality Huddles throughout the year.



Falls Prevention Campaign

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) re-launched the Falls Prevention Committee. The purpose of the Falls Prevention Committee is to prevent falls and reduce injuries from falling. This committee meets monthly to discuss current trends in falls data and potential preventive strategies for implementation.

The purpose of this committee is to identify activities that will support the reduction of falls and reduce the risk of patient injuries from falls in the Hospital. Over the past year, this team has been working hard on several initiatives not only aimed at reducing falls, but also highlighting that **everyone has a role to play** (whether clinical, non-clinical, inpatient or outpatient), including:

- Implementing non-slip socks (across inpatient and outpatient areas).
- Conducting fall risk simulations (with Dietary Aids and Housekeeping).
- Completing various audits to identify opportunities for improvement (meal tray delivery, time of falls, etc.).
- Updating the bedside communication whiteboards (embedded falling star symbol to identify high fall risk patients).
- Rolling out a campaign focused on overbed tables being cleared and placed within reach prior to meals (“When meals are on the way, make room for the tray – everyone has a role to play”).
- Developing a standardized post-fall checklist.

This initiative is helping strengthen awareness of everyday safety risks and underscore the role all staff, patients, and families play in preventing falls.



Staff Experience

This is where we want to work, grow, and thrive

WHAT WE WILL DO

Retain, recruit and support the people needed to shape our future.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

- Improve physical and emotional safety, and violence prevention.
- Achieve a safe and just culture that encourages open dialogue.
- Update our current wellness plan.
- Monitor our staff vacancy rates and enhance recruitment processes.
- Implement recruitment processes to reflect Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion.
- Implement an Interprofessional Collaborative Model of Practice.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Support the ongoing development of our current and future leaders.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

- Ensure staff have access to professional development resources and opportunities.
- Implement a leadership development framework.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE IT

- Increase positive staff experience survey results.
- Improve staff engagement.
- Recruit and retain necessary staff.



Staff Lounge

A new staff lounge was unveiled, to provide a comfortable and quiet environment where staff can relax, recharge, and connect with colleagues. The design includes panel walls that allow ambient natural lighting with a delineation of space to provide privacy from the thoroughfare. The lounge has comfortable seating for 58 people, accommodating both individual and small-group seating. There are multi-height tables, benches, coffee tables, and fresh, uplifting colours and patterns on the new furniture. Power sources are conveniently available in the space with both traditional and USB plugs to charge mobile devices or laptops.

It's a step toward enhancing Staff Experience, and the hope that all staff, professional staff, volunteers and learners to take a moment to have a look and enjoy a well-deserved break in this beautiful space.



THUNDER BAY REGIONAL HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE



Interprofessional Collaboration Strategy

The goal of Interprofessional Collaboration (IPC) Strategy is to advance IPC, to positively impact quality patient care, patient and family experiences, work environment and staff satisfaction for TBRHSC and TBRHRI. To this end, the IPC Steering Committee co-designed engagement sessions for leadership, patient family advisors, staff and professional staff. Twelve sessions involving 122 participants generated actionable ideas to advance interprofessional collaboration within the organizations, in both clinical and non-clinical settings. For the next steps, the IPC Steering Committee will review the data, make recommendations regarding the ideas proposed from the engagement sessions and finalize the Interprofessional Collaboration Strategy.



Staff Scheduling Software

New staff scheduling system upgrades were introduced with the implementation of Andgo Smartcall and Shift Pre-booking. This software streamlines shift filling work flows and allows staff to easily apply for future shifts that fit their preferences, schedule and lifestyle, and bid on available shifts. This platform enhances integration by connecting seamlessly with the UKG Pro Workforce Management software, streamlining shift filling and schedule planning through automation.

2024-2025 Annual Report



Leadership Development

Our future success hinges on a strong workforce led by individuals who inspire, support, and motivate their teams to reach their full potential. This project empowers all staff to become leaders and includes initiatives designed for all levels of leadership – from aspiring to executive.

Key achievements in our Professional Development and Leadership Community include:

Professional Development

- Welcomed 31 new participants into cohort 3 of the “Power of Persuasion: Mastering Literacy for Humanistic Leaders” program through Humber College.
- Eight leaders have completed the Rotman Healthcare Leadership program, with 13 additional leaders registered for the next session.
- Introduced monthly “Management Essentials” training, providing foundational knowledge across various topics. 259 spots have already been filled for the upcoming sessions.

Leadership Community

- Established a quarterly forum for leaders to connect, share experiences, and learn from one another, fostering collaboration across the Hospital.
- 77 leaders participated in the September “Leveraging Strengths” forum to discuss methods to support our teams.

Through initiatives like these, we are shaping the future of leadership.

Research, Innovation, & Learning

Driven by the needs of our patients, our staff, and our communities

WHAT WE WILL DO

Assess and prioritize our research efforts.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

- Prioritize research and assess current research initiatives.
- Enable opportunities for knowledge translation.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Enhance staff capacity and capability for research success.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

- Recruit researchers to address staffing gaps.
- Retain current staff and mentor new researchers.
- Establish an evaluation framework.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Create an environment supportive of research, innovation, and learning.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

- Encourage staff to lead and participate in research, innovation, and learning.
- Support continuous education and professional development.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE IT

- Increase patients enrolled or involved in research studies.
- Increase number of research publications, grants, and external funding.
- Increase number of learners.



Hello Innovation

Innovation can be difficult to define and challenging for staff to identify. As a pillar of the *Strategic Plan 2026* at TBRHSC and TBRHRI, it is important to grow awareness and support of innovation in the health care setting and develop an understanding of what innovation means to staff. Hello Innovation is a quarterly event which creates a universally accessible opportunity to highlight and celebrate innovation amongst staff at the Hospital and Research Institute. The event brings like-minded, curious, and creative people together, to encourage partnerships, recognize staff for their innovative practices, and promote a culture of creative thinking, as well as accepting failure (high-risk/high-reward). To date, the event has brought innovation into the workspace and built understanding on how staff perceive and practice innovation; fostering learning and creation among individual staff, staff units, and transdisciplinary units. With a mission to bring together creative minds, these events will aim to showcase staff-led innovation and will assist leadership in their goal to understand how staff perceive and practice innovation. Throughout the year, three Hello Innovation events have been held where creative minds have showcased 24 projects that have showed research focused innovation in action.



Learning Culture Initiative with Clinical Nurse Specialists

TBRHRI's Clinical Research Services Department has partnered with TBRHSC's Professional Practice & Learning on a pilot project focusing on research and learning. This project allows interested members of the Professional Practice & Learning team to develop their research skills and abilities through experiential learning, along mentorship and guidance from experienced TBRHRI research staff. Interested members create and lead a research project from concept to publication.

The project aims to enhance nurses' knowledge and competency in caring for patients who use substances, while directly supporting professional development. By advancing evidence-based practices, the initiative will enhance patient outcomes, improve the staff experience through meaningful engagement, and foster a culture of growth and learning. This collaboration also lays the groundwork for future research opportunities, ensuring that research, innovation and learning remains central to TBRHSC and TBRHRI's shared mission.

Outcomes from the pilot will be used to help determine how to best engage staff in research professional development, with a goal of enhancing TBRHSC and TBRHRI's research and learning culture.



Local Research Improving Cancer Treatments Worldwide

The new Cancer Therapeutic and Diagnostic Research Northwestern Ontario (CANCARE NWO) research group formed only a few months ago, but it already has an impressive head start with several studies underway.

Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim, a medical oncologist at the Cancer Centre and the group's founder, said that the new research group provides an opportunity for researchers to collaborate within the region and potentially with other research groups around the world.

"CANCARE NWO is a group that combines physicians and scientists," Dr. Ibrahim said. "It's a platform for conducting cancer research in all its types including clinical and pre-clinical (lab) research. It's the first group of its kind in Northwestern Ontario."

[Click for full article](#)

Sustainable Future

Ensuring our Healthy Future

WHAT WE WILL DO

Advance digital health to improve patient and staff experiences.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

- Secure and implement the electronic health record.
- Determine required data systems.
- Implement a plan to meet information needs.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Develop a Hospital Clinical Services Plan to clarify our acute care and academic mandates.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

- Determine which current services are consistent with our mandates.
- Estimate our short and long-term service demand.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE IT

- Prioritize our services and find operational efficiencies.
- Increase partnerships to improve and integrate care for patients.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Advance Partnerships and System Integration.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

- Advance existing regional partnerships and programs.
- Pursue strategic partnership and integration opportunities.
- Be a voice and advocate for the needs of our entire region.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Achieve Operational Sustainability and Accountability.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

- Create an accountability framework.
- Provide training and supports to improve accountability.



Clinical Services Plan

The Clinical Services Plan will validate Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre's (TBRHSC) acute care and academic mandates. In doing so, we will inform and guide planning for short- to medium-term services, as well as related resource requirements, to assess long-term service demands and the impacts on the resources required to support them.

Our Hospital plays a crucial role in providing health care services to our community and surrounding regions. As we plan for the future, we are committed to ensuring continued excellence in care through strategic planning and investment in our facilities.

The Ministry of Health: Health Capital Investment Branch has requested the development of a Stage 1.2 Proposal to establish a Master Plan following the completion of the cardiovascular surgery project. This proposal aims to help us understand the long-term redevelopment strategy for our existing site, ensuring that our future smaller and short-term projects are aligned with our broader vision.

Updates to our Master Plan typically occur every 10 years or in conjunction with major capital projects, with the last update completed in 2011.

The planned Master Program and Master Plan will ensure that TBRHSC is well-positioned to meet the evolving health care needs of our community. By carefully aligning our projects with long-term goals, we are committed to enhancing health services and infrastructure, ultimately leading to better health outcomes for all.

The North West Ontario Digital Health Strategic Roadmap

To improve patient and staff experience and enhance ongoing clinical operations, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) is committed to advancing digital health. TBRHSC has developed a sustainable regional digital health infrastructure roadmap to guide future development, embracing a "digital first" approach and enhancing the maturity and functionality of systems and processes.

Through various phases, TBRHSC will work closely with partners and transform care innovatively with the North West Ontario (NWO) Health Record

Current state and analysis work, including a tools review and maturity model, has been completed and through various partnerships, including with Confederation College Health Information Management students and Lakehead University PhD candidates, awareness and understanding of the need for information-led approaches within public sector organizations have been developed to raise awareness.

Additionally, a NWO Digital Health Innovation Board has been formed to define our strategic focus and evaluate opportunities. TBRHSC is also exploring commercially-ready opportunities for piloting in real-life scenarios and ongoing discussions with the NWO Innovation Centre have opened several possibilities that are currently being evaluated. To further implementation of Artificial Intelligence initiatives, TBRHSC is also in consultation with other hospitals in Ontario and exploring a research pilot for ambient AI transcription in the Northwest. Once the trial is completed, collaboration will occur with the Ontario Medical Association.

TBRHSC has been recognized as one of the 10 regional cyber security operations centers in the province by the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health. In the government's hub-and-spoke model, TBRHSC serves as a spoke for all health care organizations in Northwestern Ontario. All baseline assessments for Ontario Health have been completed for hospitals, with primary care assessments currently in progress.

TBRHSC is committed to advancing digital health, enhancing patient care, and ensuring the organization is well-equipped for future challenges and innovations. The progress made thus far reflects our dedication to a digital-first approach and collaboration with partners across the region.



Academic & Hospital Care Mandates

Numerous partners were consulted to help inform Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre's and Thunder Bay Health Research Institute's joint *Strategic Plan 2026*. A key theme in stakeholder feedback was the need to clarify the Hospital's academic and care mandates to ensure a clear understanding of its areas of focus and priorities.

The Hospital's academic and Hospital care mandates are intended to provide guidelines to inform decisions and priorities in areas including expansion, growth, and opportunities for long-term realignment to ensure patient care needs continue to be met.



Strategic Plan 2026 Year 3 Progress Report

We are now more than half way through our plan and we continue to make steady progress on all of our initiatives across each of our strategic pillars.

To date, we have completed 7 initiatives. We anticipate all initiatives will be completed within the duration of the strategic plan.

SP2026 Direction / Enabler	TOTAL	ON TRACK	SLIGHTLY BEHIND	SIGNIFICANTLY BEHIND	NOT STARTED	COMPLETE
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion	7	4				3
Patient Experience	5	3				2
Staff Experience	7	6				1
Research, Innovation & Learning	3	2				1
Sustainable Future	4	4				
TOTAL	26	19	0	0	0	7

Strategic Indicators Year 3 Performance

- Exceeding target for the number of patients that self-identify as Indigenous.
- Exceeding target for the number of staff that have participated in “Repairing the Sacred Circle: An Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Education Primer”.
- Wake the Giant training continues to increase towards current target. High compliance has been met for leaders and management.
- Exceeding target for overall positive experience ratings for Inpatient & Emergency Department patients.
- Results for repeat Emergency Department visits for heart failure through quarter 4 have fluctuated and remain below target.

- Exceeding target for reduction of patient harm.
- Evaluation of data source and target for staff experience is in progress.
- Exceeding target for number of investigator-initiated research studies informed by Northwestern Ontario population needs.
- Exceeding target for number of participants enrolled in a clinical trial in 2024/25.
- Improved and now better than stretch target for percent operating gross margin.
- Exceeding target for the proportion of patients aligned with regional programs/services.

At or better than target

Slightly below target

Considerably below target

Our Plan Forward Years 4 – 5

Based on our Annual Review cycle, we have made some minor refinements to project timelines and scope.

We are proud of the completion of 7 initiatives to date, and the continued progression of the remaining initiatives.

	2022/23				2023/24				2024/25				2025/26				2026/27				2027/28			
Strategic Directions / Enablers & Projects	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)																								
EDI Steering Committee Development					Complete																			
Truth & Reconciliation Call to Action Principles					Complete																			
EDI Policy & Procedure Review & Adjustment					Complete																			
Cultural Safety Training for Staff																								
EDI Physical Environment Review																								
EDI Experience Sharing to Build Understanding & Respect																								
Indigenous Recruitment, Education Support & Related Strategies																								
Patient Experience																								
Evolve Patient & Family Centred Care Using Co-Design																								
Focus on Quality																								
Seamless Transitions - Assess & Improve																								
Support Improved Coordination & Support for Frequent Users																								
Implement Substance Use and Addictions Strategies																								
Staff Experience																								
Organizational Workplace Violence Prevention																								
Implement Strategies to Support a Safe & Just Culture																								
Implement Healthy Workplace Strategies																								
Staffing, Vacancy Reporting & Recruitment																								
Design & Implement Interprofessional Collaborative Strategy <i>Model of Practice</i>																								
Value Based Recruitment																								
Enhance Leadership Development																								
Research, Innovation & Learning																								
Research Prioritization & Operationalization																								
Researcher Staffing & Recruitment																								
Establish a Culture to Support Learning & Professional Development																								
Sustainability																								
Digital Health - Shared Vision, Electronic Health Record, and Ongoing Development																								
Build and Enhance Regional Partnerships																								
Develop Clinical Services Plan to Project Future Service Demand and Required Capacities																								
Develop Framework and Strategies to Support Sustainability & Accountability																								

Ensuring Accountability, Alignment and Focus

- At the initiation of *Strategic Plan 2026*, we implemented an annual review cycle to ensure that we regularly seek and consider data and feedback to guide our plan.
- In Year 3, we conducted stakeholder engagements and an annual scan of the environment to ensure our plan is still relevant and focused as we proceed.
- The annual review resulted in the following findings and recommended refinements:
 - Directions and initiatives remain relevant – no significant changes, other than minor refinements to the timelines and scope of some projects.
 - 7 initiatives now complete and all others tracking to be complete within the duration of the plan.
 - Some indicators and targets updated, as appropriate, to ensure relevance and continued progress.
 - Continue/enhance prioritization efforts.
- Robust feedback was provided by stakeholders and partners through this process – related to advancing partnership opportunities and continuing communication and engagement efforts, internally and externally (e.g. request to continue to publish annual Truth and Reconciliation report to community). All feedback has been noted and is being considered by Project Teams for ongoing implementation.

Our Cascading and Monitoring Plan

Senior Leadership

- Monthly progress reports and monitoring
- Quarterly deep dive sessions (Strategic Performance Review)

Management and Staff

- Bi-weekly Strategic Alignment meetings and monthly Town Hall updates
- Director and manager-led discussions and monitoring with teams
- Quarterly performance debriefs
- Quarterly “Celebrating Our Progress” poster and social media updates for staff
- *NEW* Quarterly/annual updates to the public**

TBRHSC & TBRHRI Boards

- Quarterly reporting
 - SP2026 Strategic Scorecard (10 strategic indicators and project status reports)
- Annual environmental scan, partner engagement, initiative and indicator refinements

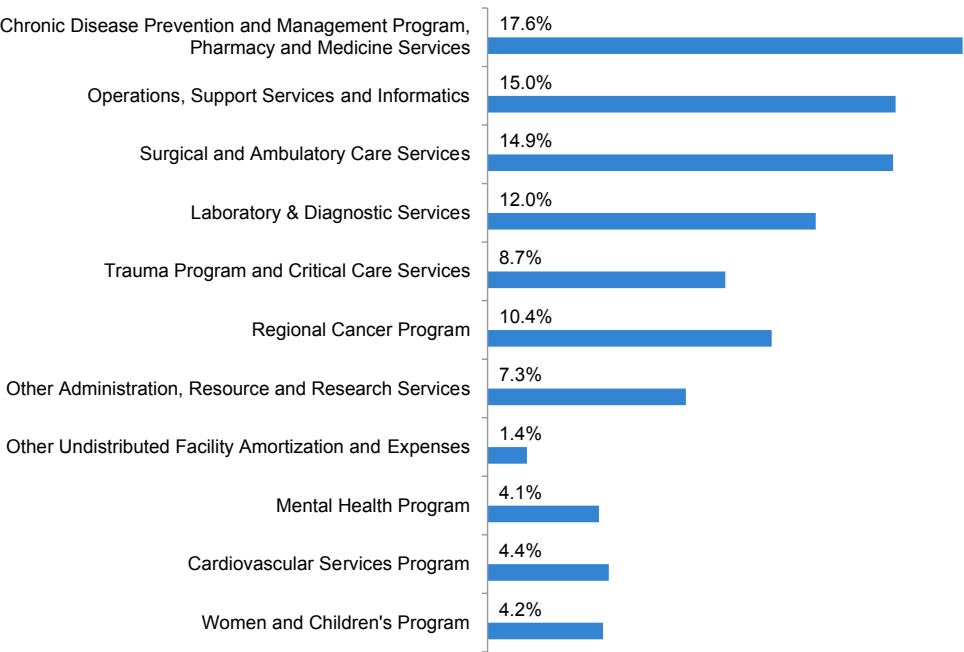
Annual Community Partner Session

Financial Statements

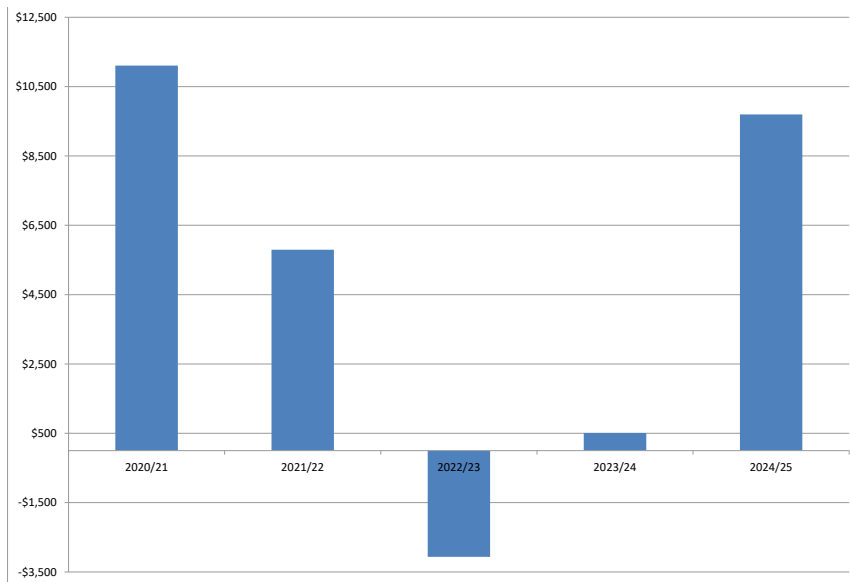
In fiscal year 2024/2025, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (the Hospital) upheld its commitment to strong financial stewardship, steering through economic challenges with discipline and foresight. Total revenues reached \$532.5 million. Following a sustained focus on addressing long-standing funding needs, the Hospital's advocacy efforts helped secure \$22 million in additional base funding - an important step in reinforcing long-term financial stability and supporting future planning and innovation.

The Hospital was able to retain one-time funding that was among the contributing factors to this year's positive financial outcome. Combined with targeted Ministry of Health investments and the newly secured base funding, this supported a consolidated surplus of \$9.7 million - reflecting responsible financial management and effective engagement within the health system.

Expenses by Program and Service



History: Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses (in thousands)



Financial Statements

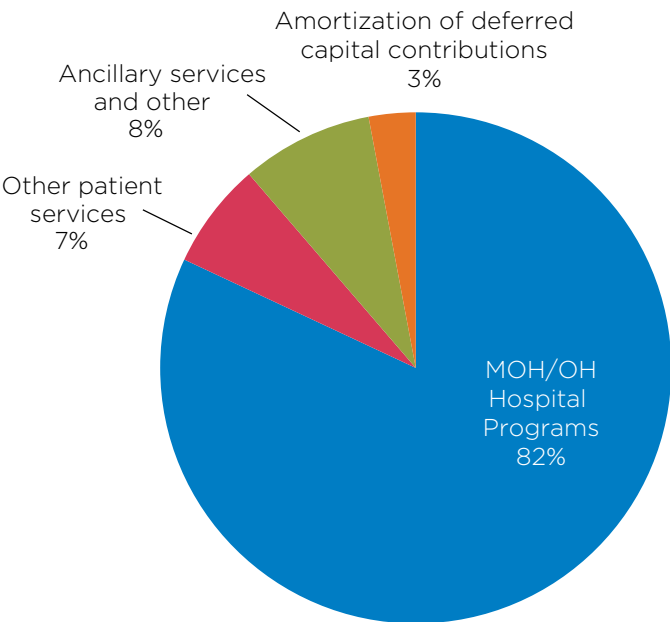
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

March 31, 2025	(Amounts in \$ thousands)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Assets						
Current assets		64,561	59,235	68,496	83,047	98,368
Non-current assets		194,125	188,224	185,031	192,531	209,617
Total Assets		258,686	247,459	253,527	275,578	307,985
Liabilities and Fund Balances						
Current liabilities		72,811	64,248	79,429	102,223	121,342
Non-current liabilities		171,403	161,031	154,442	152,473	157,314
Total Liabilities		244,214	225,279	233,871	254,696	278,656
Fund Balances		14,472	22,180	19,656	20,882	29,329
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances		258,686	247,459	253,527	275,578	307,985

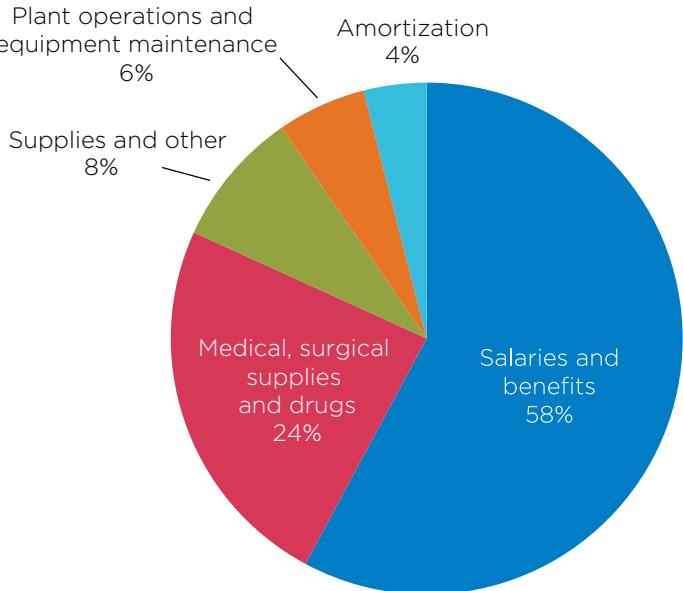
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the year ended March 31, 2025	(Amounts in \$ thousands)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Revenue						
Ontario Ministry of Health / Ontario Health North		348,268	353,986	358,197	402,880	436,447
Other patient services		27,314	33,530	31,728	36,662	35,812
Ancillary services and other		25,302	32,112	34,459	37,330	44,448
Amortization of deferred capital contributions		16,269	15,763	15,229	14,914	15,773
		417,153	435,391	439,613	491,786	532,480
Expenses						
Salaries and benefits		252,650	252,056	256,661	291,765	302,460
Medical, surgical supplies and drugs		84,993	94,090	104,982	115,209	125,193
Supplies and other		34,853	37,112	34,241	36,476	44,982
Plant operations and equipment maintenance		21,911	23,746	24,474	25,617	29,387
Amortization		23,050	22,592	22,320	22,212	20,762
		417,457	429,596	442,678	491,279	522,784
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses for year		11,106	5,795	(3,065)	507	9,696

Revenue



Expenses





Exceptional **care** for
every patient, every time.



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