

SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS, INUIT, MÉTIS, & URBAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

How An Indigenous Cancer Navigator Can Help

What you will find inside:

- What Is An Indigenous Cancer Navigator?
- Getting Support
- How Can The Indigenous Cancer Navigator Help?
- Indigenous Cancer Care: Making It Better
- Resources

What is an Indigenous Cancer Navigator?

Waterloo Wellington is home to many First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous families. The Waterloo Wellington Regional Cancer Program (WWRCP) works to provide culturally safe, easy to access, cancer care to Indigenous patients and families in the region.

The Indigenous Cancer Navigator (ICN) is a special role within the cancer program. The ICN works closely with you to support you and your family through every stage of cancer care.

Getting Support

Melanie is the Indigenous Cancer Navigator for Waterloo Wellington. Connect with her to get the support you need at **ANY point in your cancer care**. The ICN offers support **to you and your family/care partners**. You do not need a referral and can call or email her directly. She will answer questions, address concerns, and help support you to access the care you need most.



Meet Melanie Turner she/her/hers

The Indigenous Cancer Navigator for the
Waterloo Wellington Regional Cancer Program



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How Can the Indigenous Cancer Navigator Help?

The ICN works to provide culturally safe care by connecting, healing, supporting, and teaching. Learn more about how the ICN supports **you and your family** under each heading below:

Connecting

- Answers questions about what to expect with your appointments or tests
- Helps you with applications for financial and transportation services
- Helps plan access to cancer services in the home and hospital
- Connects you with spiritual and community supports
- Introduces you to your health care providers

Healing

- Collaborates with you to access cultural and ceremonial practices like:
 - Smudging
 - Cedar baths
- Assists in smudging and access to traditional medicines across all regional sites
- Coordinates access to an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, or Traditional Healing



Photo of a Traditional Ceremony at Waterloo Regional Health Network.

Supporting

- Shares information about cancer care programs for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit
- Attends clinic appointments with you, as needed
- Educates and teaches about cancer and cancer services
- Helps with discharge planning

Teaching

- Gives you information about Indigenous services throughout the Waterloo Region
- Builds a better understanding of Indigenous culture and practices with healthcare providers
- Shares information about cancer and treatment(s)
- Connects you with learning materials and handouts

What is culturally safe care?

Culturally safe care means making sure you feel respected, heard, and at ease when getting healthcare - no matter your background or culture.

Indigenous Cancer Care: Making It Better

The Waterloo Wellington Regional Cancer Program is working to make cancer care more welcoming, respectful, and easier to access for Indigenous peoples. To do this, the WWRCP is working to improve services in 4 key areas: cancer screening, safety, feedback, and team building.

Cancer Screening

Catching cancer early saves lives. We are working to make cancer screening easier by:

- Holding screening events for Indigenous peoples in safe and welcoming spaces.
- Hosting events in the community to learn about cancer screening and why it's important.
- Having the Indigenous Cancer Navigator attend Powwows and community events. This helps us come together and learn as one.

Safety

We want every person to feel safe, respected, and supported in their care. This means the WWRCP will:

- Make sure we care for all parts of your being (such as your mind, body, and spirit).
- Help you access traditional ceremonies as these play a role in healing.
- Teach and train healthcare providers about Indigenous health. This will ensure all levels of healthcare respect Indigenous traditions and values.

Feedback

The WWRCP works with local Indigenous advisory groups to help guide how cancer care is given. Their advice helps to make sure Indigenous cancer services meet the needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

The Waterloo Regional Health Network (WRHN) Indigenous Health Team also hold sharing circles. This is where community members can speak, share, and help shape care in a good way.

Team Building

Having Indigenous team members at WRHN helps to create a healthcare space that feels more welcoming to Indigenous patients and their care partners. Hiring Indigenous staff is important to the WWRCP so that we can improve how we provide Indigenous healthcare.

There are 2 key roles at the WWRCP that support Indigenous health:

1. Indigenous Cancer Navigator
2. Regional Indigenous Cancer Coordinator

These roles strengthen the Indigenous voice through storytelling, workshops, and creating materials that reflect Indigenous culture.

The WWRCP wants to put Indigenous health in Indigenous hands.

Resources

To access more information, visit the web links below. Use your cell phone to scan the QR code, or click the black text.



**Cancer 101
Toolkit**



**Indigenous Cancer
Strategy - CCO**



**Indigenous
Tobacco Program**



**Southwest Ontario
Aboriginal Health
Access Centre**



**WRHN
Careship Fund**

Use this resource for your information only. It does not replace medical advice from your doctor or other health care professionals.



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