

18 QUEBEC FIRST NATIONS: HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND SERVICES SATISFACTION

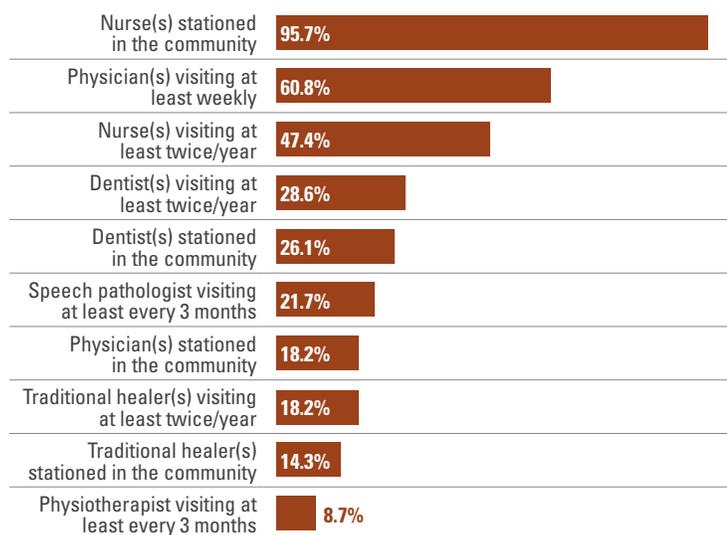
Chapter 18 of the Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS, 2008) focuses on the access to health care of Quebec First Nations living in communities as well as the availability and utilization of these services. This is a summary of the information included in Chapter 18. Therefore, it does not include all the knowledge covered by the survey, and may be open to different interpretations. To have a complete understanding of the results, the reader is invited to consult the entire chapter.

Improving access to health care for First Nations remains an important challenge (FNQLHSSC, 2008). As part of this survey, a portrait of health services in the communities has been constructed, mainly in terms of their availability. Several variables were measured, such as the perception of the level of access to health services and their utilization by young people as well as the use of and lack of access to traditional medicine. In addition, data on barriers to access to health services, difficulties related to obtaining coverage for services, changes in family doctor, hospitalization, and satisfaction with health and social services were also collected. The results for several of these variables are detailed in the following sections.

Portrait of services in the communities

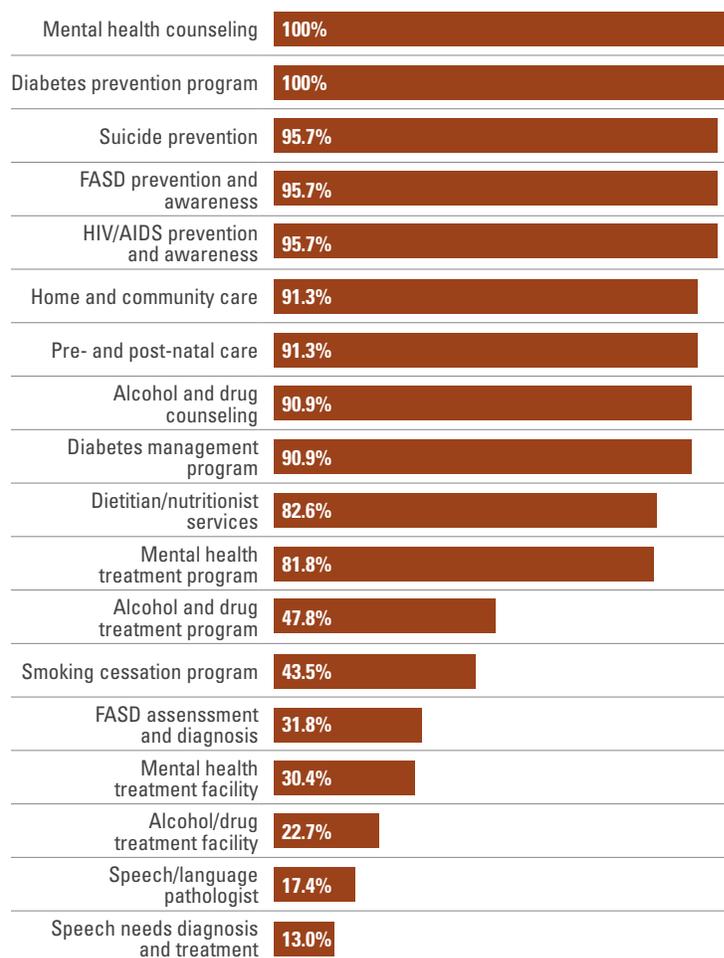
As shown in Figure 1, most communities (22 in 23) had a resident nurse on duty as well as a community health centre. Moreover, we note that only 14 of the 23 communities that participated in the survey were visited by a doctor on a weekly basis. Regarding other professional services, their presence tends to decrease considerably.

Figure 1: Presence of health care providers in the communities



With respect to different types of services and programs, Figure 2 shows the health services/programs available in the communities. It should be noted that among the 18 identified health care services, 7 are accessible in less than half of the communities.

Figure 2: Breakdown of health care services available in communities



Perceived level of access to services

More than half of First Nations, 56.3%, rate their level of access to health services as being at the same level as the general Canadian population. Moreover, the largest proportion of respondents who reported being in agreement with this statement reported having an income over \$70,000.

Utilization of services by youths (12-17 years)

Regarding utilization of services, 63.5% of youths responding to the questionnaire said they had consulted a doctor or nurse in the 12 months preceding the survey. Moreover, the results of the survey revealed important differences in the degree of geographic isolation of the communities. Indeed, 67.4% of youths living in Zone 4 reported having consulted a doctor in the 12 months preceding the survey compared to 55.8% from Zone 3. This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Youths having consulted a doctor or community health nurse, by geographic zone (N = 3,661)

Consultation of a doctor or community health nurse	Geographic zone			
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Never	13.5%	4.1%	21.7%	9.3%
Within the last 12 months	64.6%	63.4%	55.8%	67.4%
1 to 2 years ago	8.3%	11.9%	1.4%	6.7%
Over 2 years ago	6.4%	5.8%	1.4%	3.1%
I don't remember	6.5%	9.4%	15.7%	7.6%
Refused	0.8%	5.4%	4.0%	6.0%

Utilization of traditional medicine

Regarding traditional medicine, 31.8% of adults aged 18 and older reported having used traditional medicine compared to 37.8% of adults in 2002. As shown in Table 2, 37.6% of adults living in Zone 4 reported using traditional medicine while this is the case for 71.9% of adults in Zone 1. Regarding traditional medicines, 85.3% of adults report experiencing no difficulty in accessing them.

Table 2: Utilization of traditional medicine, by geographic zone (N = 9,068)

Utilization of traditional medicine	Geographic zone			
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Yes	71.9%	61.0%	64.6%	37.6%
No	26.7%	36.1%	35.2%	60.8%
Don't know	1.1%	2.9%	0.2%	1.7%
Refused	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Barriers to health care access

A number of barriers to health care access were identified as part of the survey. As shown in Figure 3, 27.9% of respondents reported that waiting lists are the main barrier to obtaining health care. We also note that adults reporting annual household incomes of less than \$20,000 are those who most frequently reported barriers to obtaining health care.

¹ Geographic zone

Degree of geographic isolation is based on a zone system developed by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

Zone 1: The community is located less than 50 km from a service centre with year-round road access.

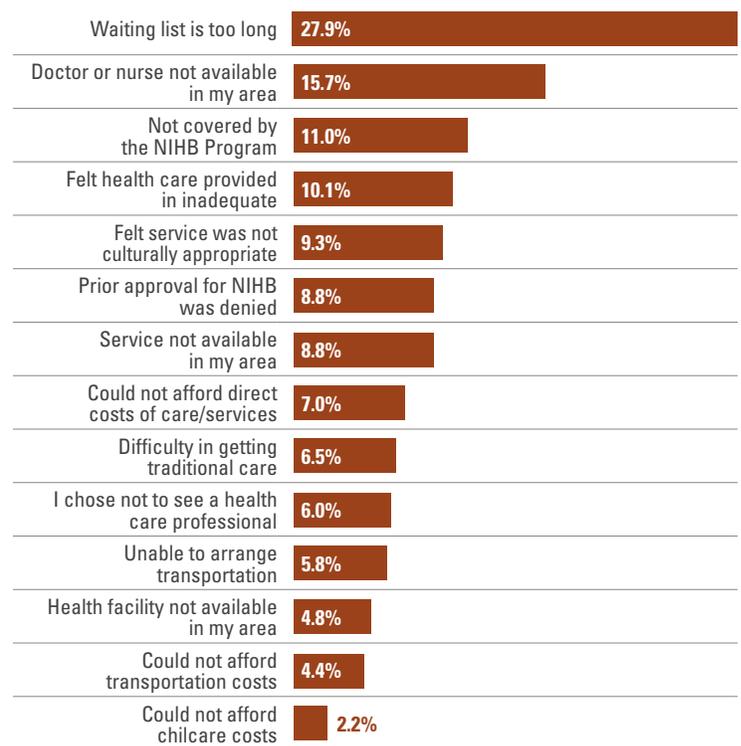
Zone 2: The community is located between 50 km and 350 km from a service centre with year-round road access.

Zone 3: The community is located over 350 km from a service centre with year-round road access.

Zone 4: The community has no year-round road access to a service centre.

Service centre: The nearest location where the community members must go in order to access service providers, banks and governmental services.

Figure 3: Barriers to health care access encountered by adult respondents (N = 19,068)



Family doctors and hospitalization

Adults living in Zone 4 reported having changed family doctors in the highest proportion. Specifically, 36% of them reported having changed doctors two or more times. In regard to hospitalization, 17% of adults surveyed reported having been hospitalized in the twelve (12) months preceding the survey. Moreover, we note that the percentage of hospitalization varies according to income. Indeed, 21% of adults with annual household incomes of under \$20,000 reported being hospitalized during the same period while this was the case for only 14.6% of those with an income of \$20,000-\$39,999, 12.4% of those with incomes between \$40,000 and \$69,999 and 14.1% of those with an income of over \$70,000.

Regarding satisfaction with health and social services, 76.7% of First Nations are "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the health services offered in the community. On the other hand, 12.9% have a neutral opinion and 9.7% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Finally, this summary provides an overview of Chapter 18 of the Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey. For more details on the survey results, the full chapter is available at the following link: <http://www.cssspnql.com/docs/centre-de-documentation/chapitre-18-accès-soins-et-satisfaction-services-eng.pdf?sfvrsn=2>



FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC AND LABRADOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION