

Mushkegowuk Okimawiwini Minopimatisiwinik Atoskawikamik (O.M.A.) Introduction

Mushkegowuk Council, or the Mushkegowuk Tribal Council, is a non-profit regional chief's council representing Cree First Nations (FN) in northern Ontario. There are seven serving member nations: Attawapiskat FN, Fort Albany FN, Kashachewan FN, Moose Cree FN, Taykwa Tagamou Nation, Chapleau Cree FN, and Missanabie Cree FN.

Mushkegowuk O.M.A is the health department under Mushkegowuk Council. The crucial need for this health department was identified in 2016. When our political territorial organization, Nishinawbe Aski Nation representing 49 First Nations across Ontario, including the seven Mushkegowuk communities declared a state of public health emergency, where the breakdown of the healthcare system is causing their people to die from treatable conditions or from suicide because of unaddressed mental health issues.

It is well known that the health disparities are prevalent in Ontario's far north as health care services are limited across the Mushkegowuk region. The state of healthcare systems in remote northern reserve communities has left the people living there facing a huge disparity between the quality of care they can receive close to home compared to anywhere else in Canada. The consequences of this substandard care, according to Nishinawbe Aski, is that many people can get sick or even die from conditions such as diabetes, hepatitis C and bacterial infections that would otherwise be easily treatable or manageable anywhere else.

As a result of this, Mushkegowuk Chiefs in Assembly through resolution mandated the establishment of a "Mushkegowuk Council Area Primary Care Hub team" with a focus on patient centered primary care based on a wholistic framework. This model is based on the traditional and cultural practices of the James Bay people – Mino Pimatiziwin.

The Mushkegowuk Council Area Primary Care Hub team, now known as Mushkegowuk Okimawiwini Minopimatisiwinik Atoskawikamik (O.M.A), is community governed and works collaboratively with existing services to provide culturally safe primary care and wellness services to communities in the Mushkegowuk territory.

Services provided through Mushkegowuk O.M.A. include:

Primary Care
Patient Advocacy/Patient Navigation
Land Based Detox
After-Care Services
Mental Health and Wellness
Traditional Healing and Wellness
Traditional Healer
Firekeeper Program