



*Thriving together*

# Strategic Plan

## 2025-2030

Final Submission |



# Indigenous Land Acknowledgment

Southern Health-Santé Sud acknowledges that the land on which it gathers is Treaty 1 and Treaty 3 Territory, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the treaties that were made on these territories and acknowledge the harms and mistakes; and we dedicate ourselves to move forward collaboratively in partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in the spirit of reconciliation.

Indigenous presence in the region can be traced back to time immemorial. Today there are 7 First Nations communities: Long Plain First Nation, Dakota Plains Oyate First Nation, Swan Lake First Nation, Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation, Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation, Dakota Tipi Wicozani First Nation and Buffalo Point First Nation.

Indigenous worldviews teach us that a plant – while its own separate entity - only flourishes in its mutual relationships within its environment: its relationships to the soil, to the neighbouring plants, to the animals and insects, and its surroundings. It is only in those relationships that the meadow as a whole is able to thrive. It's a complex web of interconnections and harmony.

"It is clear that if the plant becomes ill, that is because the other contributors to the meadow must have changed their relationships with it in some way. You can't simply heal the plant and send it back into an unchanged meadow." – (Rupert Ross, Indigenous Healing 2014, p. 9)

The people, families, communities, systems that make up Southern Health-Santé Sud are so deeply interconnected and rely on one another. We can only achieve our vision, mission and strategic priorities together in harmony.

There lies the meaning and the weight behind our vision: "Healthier People. Healthier communities. Thriving together".

There is no thriving alone.

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# Letter of Transmittal and Accountability



Honourable Uzoma Asagwara  
Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care

Honourable Bernadette Smith  
Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness

Dear Ministers Asagwara and Smith,

As approved by the Board of Directors of Southern Health-Santé Sud February 25, 2025, we respectfully submit our Strategic Plan 2025-2030. The document was prepared under the Board of Directors' direction and in accordance with the Health System Governance and Accountability Act and guidelines provided by your respective departments.

Strategic Plan 2025-2030 is made available to the public and the broad organization on Southern Health-Santé Sud's [website](#). This is an iterative plan that will evolve in response to the priorities and direction provided by the provincial government. We understand that healthcare is a shared responsibility, and we are undoubtedly committed to working closely together over the coming years to create a strong health system that upholds us all. We will continue to regularly engage with all of our parties.

Sincerely,  
Adam Monteith

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Adam Monteith".

Board Chair  
Southern Health-Santé Sud





Adam Monteith

Dana Human

## Message from the Board Chair & Interim CEO

Southern Health-Santé Sud's Strategic Plan 2023-28 was initially conceived and developed in 2023 against the backdrop of COVID-19, a time that challenged and tested all of us. It underscored the importance of focusing on a sustainable and resilient future.

Setting our course forward we re-articulated our vision and mission, adding "Purposeful Innovation" as a core value to better align to where we want to see the future and to mobilize positive change. As captured in the newly minted vision, this plan became our aspiration for **Healthier people. Healthier communities. Thriving together.**

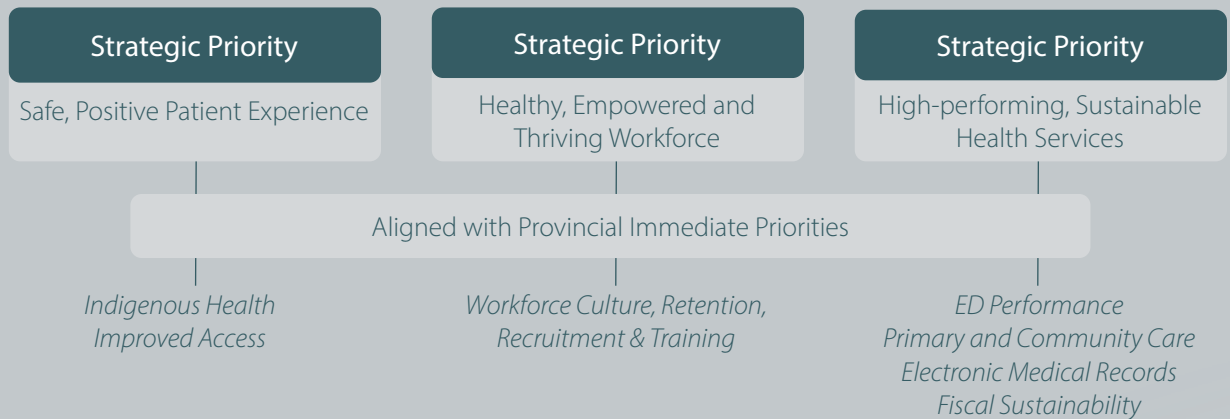
To get there, we must lead with conviction and a commitment to advance the momentum inspired in our original Strategic Plan. Strategic planning is

a dynamic process that requires continuous review and adjustment. We are engaging in a rolling strategic planning process always maintaining a five-year outlook while, re-energizing strategy in the short term with a clear sense of direction for the long term.

Building on the wisdom gained in our original planning efforts, Strategic Plan 2025-30 is now an iterative plan that will continue to evolve in response to our rapidly changing healthcare environment. It sets forward our direction for the next five years providing a framework to guide decision-making while building alignment with the overall strategic direction from government, Manitoba Health, Seniors and Long-Term, and Homelessness, Addictions and Housing, and other provincial plans in the system.



Acknowledging the breadth and depth of the organization's programs and services, the process of updating the strategic plan yielded three core strategic priorities aligned to provincial immediate priorities to focus our efforts as we move ahead.



Heading towards 2030 and beyond, the challenges we face entail major efforts that require collaboration from everyone. We received heartening and innovative input from various partners, staff, community leaders and external organizations and, as we go forward, we remain committed to learning from diverse perspectives.

We are proud and excited to share Strategic Plan 2025-30 and to reaffirm our commitment to placing people and communities at the centre of our work making a difference for a healthier inclusive future for all... **Thriving Together.**

Our journey to 2030 continues.

Sincerely,

Adam Monteith  
Board Chair  
Southern Health-Santé Sud

Dana Human  
Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Southern Health-Santé Sud

# Introduction

## The Big Picture

Healthier people. Healthier communities. Thriving together.

At Southern Health-Santé Sud we believe our vision is more than just a possibility. It is our future. It is our why.

Thriving is about “we.” We seek out the wisdom of everyone to drive meaningful change and innovation. By threading our ideas together and strengthening our partnerships with our leaders, our staff, our communities, our volunteers, our patients, clients and residents, our colleagues, our stakeholders, government and other service delivery organizations (SDO’s), we accelerate progress in achieving health equity and collective well-being.

Driven by this enduring commitment, more than 5,500 colleagues from all backgrounds, cultures and experiences go to work every day putting our mission at the forefront of everything we do. . .

Partnering with our communities, we provide safe, accessible and sustainable people-centred health care.

This requires us to listen to and learn from each other in a balanced way sharing our voices and seeking to understand different perspectives. In the spirit of “Two Eyed Seeing”, we are exploring and discovering ways to weave and intertwine both Indigenous and Western ways of being while co-creating solutions to address our collective challenges. Southern Health-Santé Sud’s values align well with the Seven Sacred Teachings, as shared by the Anishinaabe nation, further demonstrated on page 24.



### Our Core Values

#### Uncompromising Integrity

We build trust through accountability, authenticity and responsiveness in everything we do.

#### Healing Compassion

We empower hope for the whole person, being there along the journey with kindness, generosity and empathy for another’s reality.

#### Pursuit of Excellence

We put forth our personal and professional best in our commitment to the highest standards of safety, quality and service.

#### Respect for All

We commit to inclusion and equity, and embrace diversity of culture, traditions, identity, ability and thought.

#### Purposeful Innovation

We courageously create new opportunities and collaboratively generate solutions for a sustainable future.

#### Aligned with the Seven Sacred Teachings

Honesty

Love

Wisdom

Respect

Courage

Truth & Humility



Southern Health-Santé Sud, one of five Regional Health Authorities in Manitoba, is responsible for administering and delivering the health services in our region in accordance with the Health System and Governance Act. Passionately dedicated to serving our community, we provide a network of services across the lifespan and entire health care continuum throughout the region.

As the most populated rural health region in Manitoba, our area has the highest growth rate in the province, driven by a significant influx of immigrants and refugees. As a consequence, this growth has led to increased demand for health care services, infrastructure and resources, which in turn impacts costs, wait times and access to care. It also places additional strain on the health care workforce.

Health care is a complex system of people-intensive services. It is important to understand this dynamic, particularly in a large rural region where transportation, weather logistics, and limited digital technologies and connectivity across care settings can sometimes compromise access and create economic challenges. On the other hand, four of the ten cities in Manitoba are in Southern Health-Santé Sud. The unique combination of being rural-urban compels us to steadfastly work together to use our experiences and learnings to find effective solutions.

We must also deal with the confluence of significant global challenges impacting health and healthcare services worldwide, including emerging health issues and inequities, global conflicts, climate change, rising costs and evolving workforce dynamics. The environment in which we function is rapidly changing but we continue to respond with agility to the issues of our time (See section Challenges and Opportunities).



# Looking Back



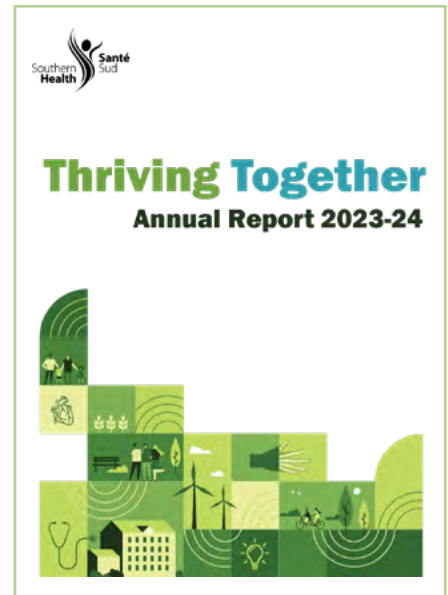
In building a more sustainable healthcare system in Southern Health-Santé Sud, work of great significance lies ahead. Working in a transparent and accountable way we are committed to fiscal responsibility and prudent stewardship of public resources.

As we look at the communities we serve and how they are growing and changing we will continue actively seeking input and feedback to achieve equitable engagement while addressing health inequities and bridging barriers to health and health care.

We choose to instill inclusion and equity into all we do.

We can take pride in our past performance and accomplishments over the years...

- including strong fiscal performance
- positive Accreditation Canada surveys
- building a culture of people-centred care and delivering what matters to people
- comprehensive quality improvement planning efforts
- ongoing expansion, renovations and new builds of capital projects
- our abiding commitment to build and promote a culture of inclusivity
- developing national award-winning Indigenous and French Language Services strategies and programs
- not to be forgotten... our commendable response to COVID-19, an extraordinary experience in which our staff went above and beyond, demonstrating their grace and compassion shining through even on the most difficult days.



See [Annual Report](#) for additional achievements.



# Environmental Scan

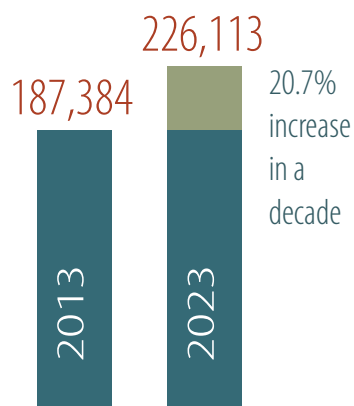
## Where We Live...

An important gateway to Manitoba from the U.S. international border, Southern Health-Santé Sud covers an expanse of 27,025 square kilometers of southernmost Manitoba stretching from the Ontario border to Winnipeg, and from the southwest edge of Lake Manitoba down to the Pembina escarpment in the west. The region forms a crucial part of a significant mid-continent trade corridor with major highway and rail systems crossing it connecting the north and south, east and west . . . The border crossing at Emerson is the second busiest along the Canada–United States border west of the Great Lakes.



While the eastern part of the region is primarily that of Canadian Shield lakes and forest, the west is predominantly prairie grassland and rolling pastures. At its heart is the Red River Valley, a natural floodplain, which has been flooded repeatedly through the centuries, impacting the lives of the people in the surrounding land.

Indigenous presence in the Region can be traced back to time immemorial. Ancient Mound-Builders left their burial and ceremonial mounds throughout the area to mark their passage and long before the first explorers came to the Region, many tribes called this place home. In the early years of European settlement, the Métis and French settled along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, and in the Portage la Prairie area. This was followed by English colonists from Ontario and in 1874 the first Mennonites came to Manitoba.



Population Projection  
255,000 by 2030



### Age Groups

0-14 years = 24%  
15-64 years = 61%  
65+ years = 15%



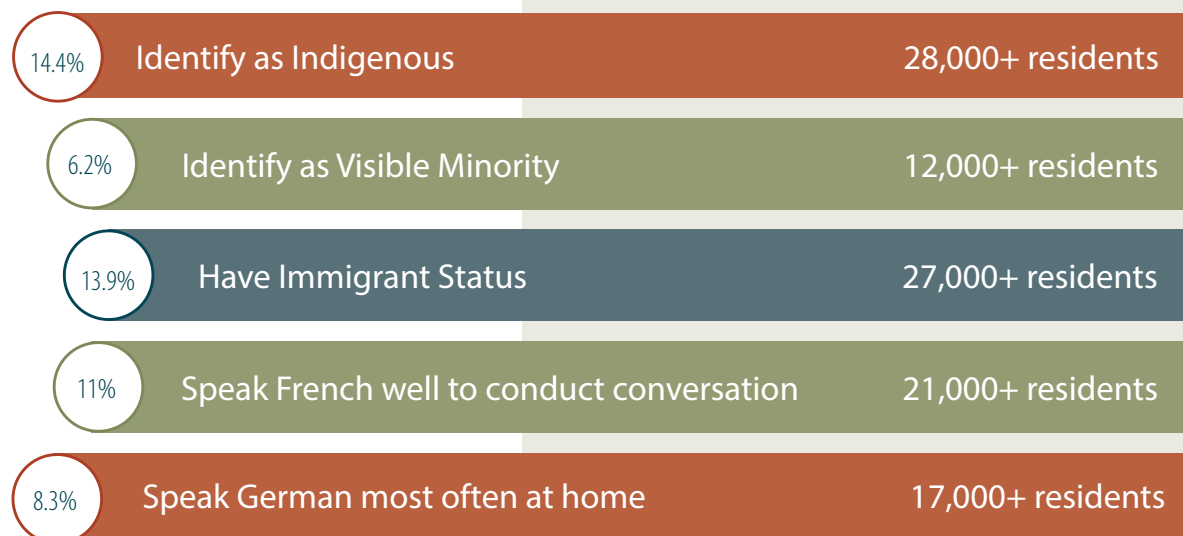
## A Growing Community... A Community for All...

Today over 226,000 people call Southern Health-Santé Sud home - the largest population and population density among rural health regions. The region has a growing population across almost all age groups with a significantly higher increase within the 0-14 and 55-64 age groups than the rest of Manitoba. While the median age is relatively young in SH-SS, concurrent with an expanding population and increasing life expectancies, the senior population (aged 65+) has also grown by 50%.

Between 2013 and 2023, our population grew by 20.7% with a dramatic influx of immigrants and refugees. By comparison, Winnipeg grew by 13.5% and Manitoba as a whole grew by 12.5%. The largest increases continue to be around bedroom communities surrounding Winnipeg, and cities of Morden, Winkler and Steinbach.

With a 1.9% annual average growth rate, our projected population will add nearly 30,000 additional residents by 2030 to the region.

The region has a diverse population with a rich cultural mosaic. The people that live here can trace their ancestries to one or more ethnic groups.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Southern Health-Santé Sud

15% of households live in low income



6% reporting food insecurity



↑ housing expenses highest among rural regions



30% without a high school certificate



## Our Health...

Southern Health-Santé Sud remains among the healthiest regions in Manitoba with life expectancy among the highest in the province and significantly higher than the Manitoba average. However, the burden of disease varies within the region, with disparities existing in different geographical areas and across population groups. As stated in the Health Status of Manitobans Report, life expectancy for First Nations people is 11 years lower than average and this gap is growing. (Health Status of Manitobans Report 2022)

There is a strong correlation between social and economic disadvantage and health inequities.

Throughout the [2019 Community Health Assessment \(CHA\)](#) we saw that the socioeconomic status varied across the region. There continues to be a wide income gap with a significantly large difference between the highest and lowest districts.

### Chronic Diseases

As the population grows and ages, more people are living with chronic diseases. Rates have increased significantly over time for diabetes, total respiratory morbidity, and childhood asthma. Heart attack rates are higher than the provincial average but improving over time. End-stage kidney disease has the highest increase in the province. Mental illness is also an important area to monitor as demand for services rises.

### Use of Preventive Services

The region has low immunization rates for influenza for older adults and the lowest percentage in the province for older adults with pneumonia immunization. We also have the lowest average in the province of completed childhood vaccinations for several vaccines (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and HPV). Cancer screening is also lower than the provincial average for colorectal, breast and cervical.

## Mental Health

Southern Health-Santé Sud 2019 CHA suggests lower numbers than the provincial average in mood and anxiety disorders, suicide rates, substance abuse and intentional injury hospitalization. However, these findings may have indicated a lack of available resources within communities. Furthermore, since then, COVID-19 and its multiple stressors have had a significant impact on many aspects of our health status. In particular, mental health issues and substance abuse were made increasingly acute by the pandemic, and that coinciding with disruptions in mental health services.



## Our Programs and Services... When it Matters Most

We are privileged to care for people at every point in their lives. Our multi-disciplinary team delivers skilled, compassionate care through a comprehensive network of health care services across the region. These services cover a range of health conditions, people's needs and age groups.



**Primary Care, Public Health-Healthy Living, Mental Health & Addictions, Home Care, Rehabilitation, Acute Care, Support Services for Seniors, Long Term Care and Palliative Care.**

Various supports enable the delivery of these services such as Indigenous Health, Human Resources, Pharmacy, Corporate Administrative Supports, Communications and French Language Services.

Shared Health is now responsible for Diagnostic and Laboratory Services, Digital Shared Services, Emergency Response Services, Human Resources Shared Services, Materials Management and Medical Assistance in Dying.

Southern Health-Santé Sud has also entered into service purchase agreements with not-for-profit affiliate partners to deliver health services. Our intention is to continually foster positive relationships with each of our partners for the benefit of all who receive care.

Southern Health-Santé Sud's [accountability agreement](#) with Manitoba Health, Seniors and Long Term Care outlines our joint responsibilities to work together and be accountable within the context of a provincial healthcare system aligned with government priorities and various department oversight processes, mandates and goals. Performance meetings, along with an accountability framework, provide a platform to consider the consistent application of evidence-based practice, clinical standards and models of care as well as promoting accountability and integrity in the public interest.



# A Model to Meet Evolving Needs...

Everyone deserves access to care. No matter where they live. Southern Health-Santé Sud is committed to making this happen through processes inspired by mutual respect and dignity and in partnership with communities and stakeholders. An enhanced model of care in the region will provide appropriate capacity at the local level to strengthen community services and primary care and to simplify how patients and providers navigate the system.

Bearing in mind today's emerging health challenges, service delivery realities and our increasingly diverse and growing population, this requires a meaningful consideration of the most appropriate places to provide consistent access to quality services. In particular, a Community Emergency Service Design with a focus on maintaining predictable, reliable and sustainable service hours would feature a spectrum of capabilities requiring investments in health services available in local communities as well as changes to how and where some services are delivered.

As per MHS LTC High Level System Strategy, there is a need for a multi-disciplinary response in the emergency department so that people who are frail, mentally unwell, homeless, suffering from addictions or requiring minor treatments are managed well in an appropriate, timely and respectful care setting. The concept of a 'core care team' will function as part of the broader healthcare system with connections to facility staff, local, regional and provincial services including diagnostics, pharmacy, allied health, Indigenous health, mental health, emergency response services (ERS) and primary care. This multidisciplinary team, works to their full scope of practice to address patient needs.

With a growing seniors population, Southern Health-Santé Sud has committed to ensuring they can remain healthy, independent and engaged in society, across their aging journey. The development and implementation of quality, dependable and reliable supports available for seniors, enabling them to remain at home longer, remain closer to home or allowing them to return home more quickly after care.

Three community-driven capital projects are strengthening the network of medical services in the region:

- a regional health centre in Portage la Prairie that offers more inpatient beds, expanded medical and surgical capacity and a modern emergency department;
- an expansion of Bethesda Regional Health Centre in Steinbach that will include additional acute care inpatient beds;
- an expansion of Boundary Trails Health Centre in the Morden/Winkler area that adds new acute-care inpatient beds and provides larger, more modern spaces for patient-care programs.

These cornerstone capital projects will lay the foundation for building local service capacity and delivery. The region will provide access to many service locally that previously may have required multiple trips to Brandon or Winnipeg. This will reduce wait times, unnecessary travel, and will also meet the needs of patients closer to home by enhancing access to primary care, prevention, support for chronic conditions, mental health and addictions, rehabilitation and improved home care. Finally, providers at smaller facilities will be able to care for their patients by simplifying specialty consults and timely transfers to other facilities when required.

At the forefront of any consideration are those we care for.



Regional Health Centre in  
Portage la Prairie



Bethesda Regional Health Centre in  
Steinbach



Boundary Trails Health Centre in  
Morden/Winkler



My team contributes to a positive experience for our clients and co-workers by working together in a collaborative and multi-disciplinary, holistic approach for those experiencing mental health on their recovery journey.

**Nicole Jones**  
(Mental Health Program)



## Stronger Together...

### Aligning across the System



Delivering quality health services requires collaboration across the system. While addressing local care needs, we also collaborate with our colleagues across the entire health care continuum to improve access to specialized services. We appreciate the value of relationships in all that we do working with others in a shared responsibility to create a strong system that upholds us all.

As part of broader provincial initiatives, Southern Health-Santé Sud actively participates in provincial discussions aligning to government mandates and the High-Level System Strategy, Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (HAH), the Health Care Retention and Recruitment Office, Capital and Digital Plans, Shared Health, clinical team participation and health transformation. Together we plan how services and resources can be used in smarter, modern ways with a heightened focus on specific populations, preventive health and well-integrated multidisciplinary care teams.

## Resource Allocation...

### Doing the Right Things

From its very beginning fiscal sustainability has been a key part of the culture of Southern Health-Santé Sud. While we continue to stand in good stead with the consistency of our performance and proven track record, the combination of inflation, ongoing supply chain issues and service volume increases is intensifying pressure on our ability to respond appropriately to the challenges faced by different communities.

The region continues its practice of zero-based budgeting reviewing every budget line and position, looking for savings to either reinvest internally into critical pressure areas or re-align funding. We maintain a disciplined approach in our fiscal policies and practices and an ethical budget planning process—teams across the organization collaborating in identifying areas of needs and areas where dollars can be “shared”.

While there have been many positive medical advancements over the years, there is also an associated need to continuously refresh the technology-based diagnostic imaging, diagnostic testing and health

care medical technology. Ensuring that we are up to date with current diagnostics and patient monitoring improvements is critically important to supporting patient safety and ensuring better patient outcomes. It is equally important that we implement new diagnostic, testing and treatment modalities in the coming years.

In responding to the escalating demands on the health care system, Digital Health has become indispensable, connecting people and information across the system, supporting decision-making and reinforcing virtual care capabilities. Southern Health-Santé Sud looks forward to seeing future capital investment priorities for Digital Shared Services.

## Jurisdictional and Regulatory Issues...

### Doing Things Right

Southern Health-Santé Sud has an accountability agreement with Manitoba Health, Seniors and Long-term Care outlining the roles, responsibilities and expectations for each. The Board of Directors ensures that all legislative requirements are met in a timely way. Agendas are structured to fulfill the functions of oversight, insight and foresight. There is also an ongoing commitment to quality care, maintaining an accredited status and upholding the standards required by Accreditation Canada.

To reduce, the negative health impacts of jurisdictional lines, a historical formalized [Indigenous Health Partnership Agreement](#), the first of its kind in Manitoba, was signed in 2016 between Southern Health-Santé Sud, Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council, Dakota Tipi First Nation, Long Plain First Nation, Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation, Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation, Swan Lake First Nation and First Nations Inuit Health Branch. Partners in this agreement recognized that “together we’re stronger than any one of us alone”, with each partner having a legitimate role in improving First Nations health and health services coordination.

Southern Health-Santé Sud is committed to focus on Indigenous participation in regards to collaboration, planning, problem-solving, working together towards building a culturally safe health care system.

As well, while fifty percent of rural Manitoba francophones live in the region, higher than the Manitoba proportion and the highest across health regions, Southern Health-Santé Sud is provincially mandated as a designated bilingual regional health authority. The [French Language Services Strategic Plan](#) outlines the strategies and means by which it will ensure that health services are offered and accessible in French in Southern Health-Santé Sud.



# Shared Challenges & Opportunities

Moving on towards 2030, we continue to navigate a changing health care landscape, with emerging and evolving challenges and opportunities. The experience of the past few years has underscored the importance of having a shared purpose, of leveraging our collective resources and aligning our efforts to overcome the challenges. As we contemplate an inclusive future where we are thriving together, we will need to draw on the strength and ingenuity of our communities, staff, partners, government and other SDOs—everyone!

Population Growth

COVID-19 Legacy

Health Inequities & Disparities

Health Staff Shortage

Challenges to Accessible, Safe, & Equitable Care

Information Technology-Infrastructure & Access

Photo credit:  
Jennifer Klassen





## The Common Thread. . . Population Growth

As previously demonstrated on p. 11, over the last decade, Southern Health-Santé Sud's population has grown by 21%—nearly ¼ of Manitoba's total population growth, the highest in the province. The population is also increasing exponentially, estimated to grow from 226,113 in 2023 to exceed 255,000 by 2030, the highest projected percentage growth in the province. The changing needs of our communities illustrate the complex relationship between population growth and the increasing demands and heightened service expectations on the health system in our region.

For the most part, our growing population is a good thing. However, with rapid growth comes many challenges including stress on infrastructure, strain on public health with transmission of communicable diseases, the ensuing demand for health care professionals outpacing the supply of providers and the potential for inequitable health access and outcomes among populations.

## The COVID-19 Legacy

The pandemic has had a profound effect on the health of our communities, impacting the health system to its very core. It exposed the gaps and vulnerabilities in the health system, challenging every part of Southern Health-Santé Sud like never before. It also gave prominence to existing challenges. The effects of the pandemic such as the delay in seeking care, increased demand for mental health & addiction services, long wait times for most services and the post-pandemic influx of patients seeking care... all have had an impact on the health care experience.

Although the pandemic illustrated many aspects of the health system at its best, the shortcomings, gaps and systemic stressors that existed before remain, and in some cases are amplified, impacting our performance capacities—a consequence of added pressures in the system and health needs and inequities of the population.



**“There is a post-COVID legacy impacting care professionals, public confidence and fiscal pressures.”**

**High Level System Strategy**  
*(Manitoba Health  
Seniors & Long Term Care)*



**“There are significant health inequities and disparities, made worse by health illiteracy, discrimination and disadvantage.”**

**High Level System Strategy**  
*(Manitoba Health  
Seniors & Long Term Care)*

Our relationships and partnerships with clients and community are critical to achieving our collective goals and priorities. Health system changes, what and how we communicate, and poor health care experiences are examples of factors that impact engagement and trust built in these relationships.

## **Health Inequities and Disparities**

The pandemic highlighted the existing and persisting health and social inequities, disproportionately affecting racial and economically disadvantaged persons. As reported in the Health Status of Manitobans Report, members of diverse racialized communities had much higher numbers of COVID-19 infections, taking into consideration their smaller population sizes with 3 - 10 times higher risk for infection; 2 - 7 times higher risk for hospitalization; and 2 - 6 times higher risk for ICU admission.

The social determinants of health including the legacy of colonialism have an effect on a wide span of health, functioning, quality-of-life experiences and outcomes and access to health care. While the burden of disease varies within Southern Health-Santé Sud, the Seven Regions district (north west corner) consistently experiences some of the poorest outcomes. The social determinant of health data may help to explain this disparity.

Recognizing the history and ongoing legacy of residential schools we are placing emphasis on increased Indigenous participation in regards to collaboration, planning, problem-solving, and increased awareness of individual health issues and supports.

Health Equity is a shared responsibility that requires the collaboration of many. The actions needed to reduce inequities go beyond the healthcare system. It's about building capacity together with our communities and partners. We will continue to support work that addresses the social determinants of health and to improving health care access and experience for vulnerable populations.

“Access to services is affected by the health human resources challenge across Manitoba”.

High Level System Strategy  
(Manitoba Health  
Seniors & Long Term Care)



“Public concern that services will be accessible or available at the time and place required.”

High Level System Strategy  
(Manitoba Health  
Seniors & Long Term Care)

## Health Staff Shortage

The pandemic had a profound impact and accelerated existing workforce shortages which is now heightened within a global competitive labour market. Health care providers continue to offer quality, safe, people-centred care but they do so in the context of substantial vacancies and a growing demand with the expansion of our regional centres and our growing population. With an aging workforce and the struggle to recruit staff to smaller rural communities, the challenge persists while vacancies filled by agencies are a costly alternative.

With mounting health care demands and acute pressures, adequate supports are essential to protect the workforce's health and resilience. The scale and complexity of the challenge requires more than a local solution. While we have seen high rates of vacancies specifically in nursing positions, our focus is to address recruitment and retention across all sectors, continuing our strategies to create a more inclusive workforce. Strategies will also be focused on the recruitment of bilingual designated positions and Indigenous representation.

An operational readiness plan has been developed for the three regional health centres' major capital projects to ensure a smooth transition once the doors “open” in 2025. For a successful start-up, workforce availability and preparedness are critical elements of operational readiness. While indeed challenging, the recruitment, training and upskilling of personnel are immediate priorities.

## Challenges to Accessible, Safe, & Equitable Care

Access to safe and equitable care continues to be challenged by significant workforce shortages, population growth, population health inequities and the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is uniquely challenging in the context of a large rural geography. Patients who want to access services struggle to find providers, face long wait times, and have to navigate temporary closures of sites.

While on average emergency department (ED) wait times may appear reasonable there is variation across the region. Staffing challenges faced by smaller rural facilities result in both inconsistent ED hours of operation and unpredictable inpatient bed capacity. This limits local community access to ED services, which hinders efforts to repatriate patients from larger regional facilities to rural facilities closer to their homes, and further exacerbates equitable access issues faced by Indigenous Manitobans.

To help address the wait times, a thorough review and comparison of Emergency Departments was conducted for all three regional health centres. An Emergency Department Joint Council is actioning the recommendations from the review to implement a number of practices and protocols to reduce wait times.

## Information Technology – Infrastructure & Access

In these digitally-driven times we absolutely need to be in step with technological opportunities. Because of our inability to access the proper technology, many of our programs still rely on paper-based systems. When information systems are available, they are not always integrated with one another or have important limitations. Together, this decreases efficiency and may pose a risk to patient and staff burden and safety.

## Looking forward...

We are confident that our strategic plan provides a framework that supports our vision and mission, advancing our goal of Thriving Together. Aligned with Manitoba Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care's goals and priorities, Southern Health-Santé Sud's strategies also reinforce our commitment to doing the right things as well as doing things right. At its core, it embodies a dedication to Better Care for People ensuring the well-being of both health care workers and the people they serve.

To accomplish this, how and where we provide care will evolve. Central to this evolution is our resolve to address the challenges while exploring new approaches and to close disparities and build a more equitable, accessible and sustainable healthcare system for all.



**“The public expect access to new treatments and medical technologies”.**

**High Level System Strategy**  
*(Manitoba Health  
Seniors & Long Term Care)*

# Truth & Reconciliation

We acknowledge that colonial practices have had and continue to have devastating impacts on culture and language, loss of land, socio-economic status and disproportionate health outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

We have a shared responsibility to support and advance meaningful Truth and Reconciliation.

## Our commitment . . .

Southern Health-Santé Sud strives to respond to the holistic needs of Indigenous peoples by building partnerships, trust and by applying a cultural safety lens throughout all facets of our health care services. Committed to meaningful change we are actively involved in addressing racism and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through actions within our organization. We also hold accountability for these actions through our collaborations with Indigenous rightsholders and provincial partners.

While affirming its commitment in responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, Southern Health-Santé Sud is committed to holding space to reflect and learn about truth and reconciliation so that we can provide culturally safe, high quality care free of racism.

To ensure reconciliatory actions are fully integrated into everything we do, it has been intentionally established as one of the four Foundational Principles of Strategic Plan 2025-2030.

## The Teaching about Etuaptmunk (Two-Eyed Seeing). . .

Elder Albert Marshall shares the teaching of Etuaptmunk. This teaching known as “the gift of multiple perspectives” is translated as “Two-Eyed Seeing”. It first came into use in the natural science discipline but has since been adopted throughout many systems.

Two-Eyed Seeing reminds us that we have “two eyes from which to look” and so we are not bound by only one worldview. When we realize, for example, that this place where we live: Manitoba but “Manitoahbee, (the Place Where Creator Sits)”, “Canada”, “Turtle Island”, “Home” is not just one thing, not just an “either/or” dichotomy but is many things all at once we open ourselves to a richness and depth of seeing and doing. We need to understand that one worldview is not more important than another. This is the essence of Two-Eyed Seeing.





## Our Shared Values Explained

When viewed through the teaching of Two-Eyed Seeing, Southern Health-Santé Sud's core values easily align with the Seven Sacred Teachings – which have been shared by the Anishinaabe nation with all nations and are a guide to living in connection with each other, with Earth and with Creator. When Indigenous people in our region talk about doing something “in a good way” we are referring to using these teachings as a framework for our actions. The Seven Sacred Teachings are: Love, Truth, Wisdom, Respect, Honesty, Courage and Humility.

### SH-SS Core Value is uncompromising Integrity

Integrity is **Honesty**. To be honest and transparent in how decisions are made, and directions are created.

Honesty requires us to “walk our talk”. Our words and actions must always coincide.

### SH-SS Core Value is Respect for all

Equity and inclusion demonstrate **Respect**. If we truly embrace respect for all, we will deliberately work to widen the circle, to keep doors open and listen to voices that struggle to be heard elsewhere.

### SH-SS Core Value is healing Compassion

Compassion is **Love** in action. It is the ability to see and approach others with understanding and empathy. It is about understanding that we are neither less than, nor more important than, others.

### SH-SS Core Value is purposeful Innovation

Innovation fosters the opportunity to learn, grow, and improve. This calls on us to be **Courageous**, to take risks and to speak truthfully and honestly.

### SH-SS Core Value is the pursuit of Excellence

Attaining excellence is dependent on understanding that there are many ways of being, doing, and knowing. **Wisdom** and gifts we carry can be used for the well-being of all peoples.

**Truth** and **Humility** are over-arching teachings and span across all SH-SS core values. They are the teachings that guide all others because to speak the truth you feed the spirit and allow the spirit to grow.

# Thriving Together: Our Inspiration

At the core of Strategic Plan 2025-30 we have a clear vision, a mission and values which continue to inspire and drive us to be the best we can every day.

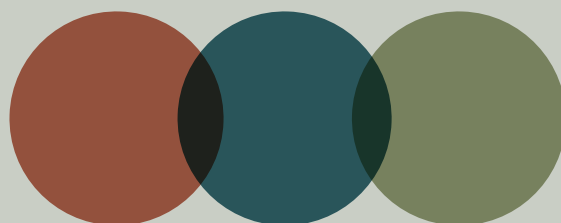
Indigenous teachings instill in us a deep interconnection with all that surrounds us. A visual illustration of this connectedness used by Indigenous peoples is the tree. Like the tree, the health system is a complex entity that needs certain conditions to succeed in its vision and mission represented here in Southern Health-Santé Sud by the leaves.

The tree's extended branches illustrate the advancement of three overarching Strategic Priorities which will steer our work towards 2030. These are consistent with the immediate priorities detailed in the province's High Level System Strategies with objectives that provide additional focus to our strategic priorities and support a shared responsibility for establishing an integrated provincial health system. While the priorities are important unto themselves, they are not mutually exclusive; each is vital to the success of the others.

The tree thrives into the future as its roots draw sustenance from four Foundational Principles that ground us and shape how we approach everything we do. They cut across all priorities collectively advancing the optimal improvement of the whole system and support the goals of health care.

With meaningful consideration of ministerial mandates, health priorities and service delivery realities in our region, we are responding to specific health challenges that a diverse growing population like ours requires.

As we move forward, what may differ are the ways in which we accomplish this because health care is dynamic, reflecting the ever-changing population and needs of Southern Health-Santé Sud's community. Two-Eyed Seeing does not seek to merge two knowledge systems into one another. Instead, it asks us to elevate all voices and perspectives in shared power, and advocates for the recognition and respect for diverse perspectives.



# Strategic Plan on a Page

## Our Vision

Healthier **people**. Healthier **communities**.  
**Thriving** together.

## Our Mission

Partnering with our communities, we provide safe, accessible and sustainable people-centred health care.

## Our Core Values

Uncompromising  
Integrity

Healing  
Compassion

Pursuit of  
Excellence

Respect  
for All

Purposeful  
Innovation

Aligned with the Seven Sacred Teachings

Honesty

Love

Wisdom

Respect

Courage

Truth & Humility

## Strategic Priority

Safe, Positive Patient  
Experience

## Strategic Priority

Healthy, Empowered &  
Thriving Workforce

## Strategic Priority

High-performing,  
Sustainable Health Services

Aligned with Provincial Immediate Priorities

Indigenous Health  
Improved Access

Workforce, Culture,  
Retention, Recruitment  
& Training

ED Performance  
Primary & Community Care  
Electronic Medical Records  
Fiscal Sustainability



## Our Foundational Principles

People-Centred  
Care

Truth &  
Reconciliation

Intentional  
Engagement

Connectedness  
& Alignment

## Why it matters

The COVID-19 pandemic put enormous pressure on health care. Persisting health and social inequities resulted in disproportional impacts on racialized populations, Indigenous peoples, and vulnerable populations. There are also indications that the breadth and depth of the pandemic challenges and its associated social and economic upheavals negatively impacted mental health, substance use patterns and well-being of many.

With our unwavering commitment to improve patient outcomes, health equity and experiences, we are focused on the whole person and team, on what matters to people in their healthcare journey.

It's about thriving together, advancing access and navigation, an environment where health equity and inclusion are upheld, service that is timely and responsive — delivering exceptional quality and safety in every interaction and across the patient journey for everyone involved.

## ALIGNS with PROVINCIAL PRIORITIES

- Indigenous Health
- Improved Access



## What Success Looks Like - Objectives

Meaningful engagement processes with Indigenous peoples to make system improvements.

Activities that work towards health equity eliminating all forms of racism and removing barriers to access.

French Language Services across the continuum of care.

Wait time reduction to improve health care accessibility and system responsiveness.

Patient and public engagement for health advisors to partner with the organization at various levels to help with co-designing of programs and services.

Capital, program and service-model improvements to meet the current and future needs of the population.

Safe experiences for patients and families.

Access to community mental health and addictions supports.

## Why it matters

It is said “You’re truly only as strong as your team”. Southern Health-Santé Sud is committed to cultivating a safe, inclusive workplace environment with diverse, skilled and engaged staff adaptable to future changes.

We believe in the power of teamwork grounded in meaning and purpose while maximizing scope and expertise and a positive organizational culture.

We understand the importance of validating staff dedication through various means, fostering a learning supportive environment, mentoring and providing ongoing development opportunities.



## What Success Looks Like - Objectives

Healthy work environment that fosters a shared sense of belonging, wellbeing and pride in the workplace.

Ongoing regional education, training and other opportunities.

Staff growing, learning and developing their leadership skills and competence.

A holistic and robust approach to recruitment and retention, in collaboration with communities and provincial partners.

Systems and processes support equal opportunity for employment.

Innovative approaches that manage vacancies in the workforce.

Operational readiness for three cornerstone capital projects.

## ALIGNS with PROVINCIAL PRIORITY

- Workforce culture, retention, recruitment & training



## Why it matters

In advancing our vision and mission Southern Health-Santé Sud aspires to provide consistent access to clinical expertise with reliable high-quality systems supported by best practice techniques, diagnostics and technologies. We strive to secure better data and metrics.

We embrace innovation exploring new approaches in responding appropriately to the challenges to provide appropriate capacity at the local level with enhanced primary care, prevention, support for chronic conditions, mental health and addictions, and community services. Three significant capital projects currently underway will lay the foundation for building local service capacity and delivery.

A disciplined approach in our fiscal policies and practices enable ethical budget planning - teams collaborate in identifying areas of needs and areas where dollars can be “shared” to make the best use of resources available.

## ALIGNS with PROVINCIAL PRIORITIES

- ED performance
- Primary and Community Care
- Electronic Medical Records
- Fiscal Sustainability



## What Success Looks Like - Objectives

Financial resiliency in planning for value-based population health efforts, prevention of disease and health promotion interventions.

A balanced budget, leveraging opportunities to improve efficiencies and effectiveness.

Standards of care across the organization are achieved.

Best practices in patient flow and ED management.

Connectivity and modern digital solutions.

Integration of services so that more patients are treated in the most appropriate settings.

Completed capital projects.

Improvement and enhancement of our emergency department performance, primary and community services.

High-performing results within the Manitoba Health Performance Management Framework.

# Foundational Principles ...

Critical to our entire strategic plan we have identified four foundational principles that ground us and shape how we approach everything we do.

Our foundational principles cut across all priorities to collectively advance the goals of health care, health equity, and the optimal improvement of the whole system.





# People-Centred Care

At Southern Health-Santé Sud, people-centred care is a whole system approach.

Patients, clients, residents and family members are at the core of our vision and mission. We cannot thrive together without acknowledging that each interaction in the healthcare system must have people and communities at the centre of our mindset.

People-centricity also means understanding culture and teamwork throughout the organization valuing the workforce contribution.

It is our moral imperative to create an equitable future for all into the planning and delivery of care.





# Truth & Reconciliation

Southern Health-Santé Sud continues its commitment to advancing reconciliation and revitalizing our relationship with Indigenous peoples and to collaborate on efforts and share knowledge that will improve the health system, patient care experiences and ultimately, health outcomes for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Building an equitable and just healthcare system that is inclusive and better meets the needs of Indigenous people requires us to place a focus on equity, address and collaboratively work to eliminate racism, increase opportunities for Indigenous peoples to become a part of our health system's workforce, respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and embed cultural safety in all that we do.

# Intentional Engagement

Much of what makes us healthy lies outside of the health system. Our success depends in no small part on the strength of our relationship with our communities. It is exceptionally important to bring together all sectors of society in coordinating mutually reinforcing action to address the determinants of health and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their best health and well-being.

Promoting a shared purpose and common goals, we will work collaboratively with our partners to address key challenges, to consult and engage communities regarding health care services and programs in the region.





# Connectedness & Alignment

Thriving together requires us to strengthen our connections, to promote learning and mutual support and to embrace diverse perspectives across the wider network of which we are a part. In moving towards equitable well-being, we recognize the power of building innovative partnerships for health and health care service improvement with stakeholders and communities within, across and beyond health systems and in the context of the province's overall goals and health mandates.

We must remain agile and adaptable and honour our interconnectedness in a complex and evolving health care landscape. The past few years has underscored the importance of leveraging our collective resources, of exchanging ideas and experiences and aligning our efforts to overcome the challenges and create meaningful change.



# Honouring the Work of Engagement

Engagement is a foundational principle of Southern Health–Santé Sud, as identified throughout this plan. It is key to the strategic planning process, ensuring that the diverse voices of our community are embodied. Key informant interviews, stakeholder group meetings and a range of staff engagement events took place to build the core components of this plan. Identifying strengths, challenges/risks and opportunities/critical success factors within Southern Health–Santé Sud was the focus of discussion.

## WHAT WE HEARD...

### Strengths

- Fiscally Responsible
- Our Staff & Leadership
- Focus on Engagement
- A “Can-Do” Attitude
- Collaborative Approach

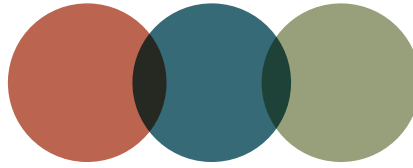
### Opportunities

- Advocacy and Upstream Thinking
- Technology
- Becoming Leaders Provincially
- Recruitment/Retention
- Culture

### Challenges & Risks

- Misalignment of Priorities (community/province)
- Rural Barriers
- Human Resources
- Electronic Records
- Communication
- Resources to Match Needs
- Community Expectations

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