



## Report from the Board Chair *October 2021*

With children back in school and our communities back from summer vacation, I truly hope the residents of Northwestern Ontario took the opportunity to enjoy our immense natural wonders and safely reconnect with friends and loved ones over the past few months. A year and a half of this historic pandemic has undoubtedly tested everyone's resolve and mental endurance.

At the same time, I would like to begin by acknowledging and thanking our frontline healthcare workers and senior leaders who had very little downtime the past few months as the fourth wave of the pandemic continued. As you know, health care doesn't take holidays and our staff and working as hard today as they were when this pandemic began. They continue to earn our respect and admiration on a daily basis.

As we look forward, there are encouraging indicators. Our region proudly boasts a population that is 84 percent fully vaccinated with 90 percent of our residents having received their first dose. The hard work of our vaccination team has also seen TBRHSC reach the top tier of vaccination efforts with an amazing 95 percent inoculation rate among staff. We continue to work on educating the unvaccinated on the benefits as we know the double vaccine is currently the best defense against COVID-19.

In addition, this autumn will see the presentation and release of our Strategic Plan. It contains five pillars of focus: Patient Experience, Research Education and Innovation, Staff Experience, Advancing Technology and Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion. This Strategic Plan will help guide us through the next five years as we strive for success while delivering the highest level of patient satisfaction and institutional prominence as we look to 2026 and beyond.

A key aspect of our upcoming Strategic Plan relates to enhancing the health care experience at TBRHSC for Indigenous people – something we have already started actioning. Our Strategic Plan will be guided by a philosophy that takes a holistic approach to health. Good health is about the body, mind, and spirit. All aspects must be taken into consideration when we are providing care. In the spirit of patient-centered care, and truth and reconciliation, we will not be content doing things to – and for – patients. Instead, we will strive to do things **with** patients, recognizing that they are full partners in health care.

Last week, as you know, was marked by the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day, on September 30th. Reconciliation begins with acknowledging the truth. As part of our commitment to truth and reconciliation, we will work toward creating an environment at TBRHSC that acknowledges the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to apply them as a lens to every decision we make as an institution. In doing so, we will be assured of delivering the highest levels of compassion, inclusion and health care to every person and patient we see and treat.

I would like to encourage everyone to stay safe and continue to follow provincial health and public health directives as we move from fall into winter.

Gord Wickham  
Chair, Board of Directors, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre