



Department of Pediatrics

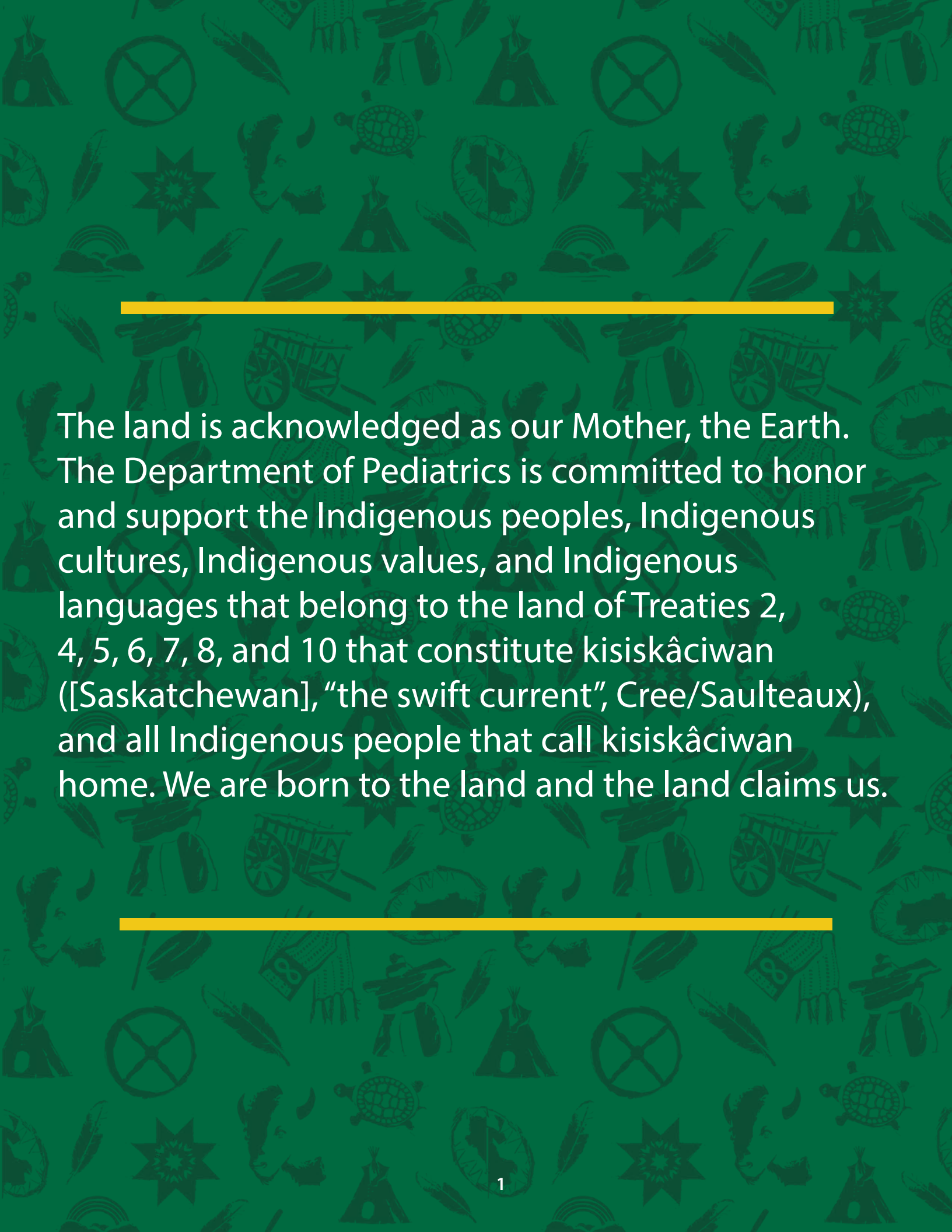
2025-2030 Strategic Plan



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of Medicine
DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS
MEDICINE.USASK.CA



Saskatchewan
Health Authority



The land is acknowledged as our Mother, the Earth. The Department of Pediatrics is committed to honor and support the Indigenous peoples, Indigenous cultures, Indigenous values, and Indigenous languages that belong to the land of Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 that constitute kisiskâciwan ([Saskatchewan], “the swift current”, Cree/Saulteaux), and all Indigenous people that call kisiskâciwan home. We are born to the land and the land claims us.

Message from the Provincial Department Head

Dr. Terry Klassen, MD, MSc, FRCPC



As the Department of Pediatrics looks toward the years ahead, our vision remains steadfast. This strategic plan builds upon the strong foundation already in place while charting a path toward a more connected, equitable, and innovative provincial pediatric system.

Over the past year, we have made tremendous progress in expanding our provincial capacity and strengthening our academic and clinical expertise. I am delighted to share that we have welcomed outstanding new faculty members in several key areas, including metabolics, genetics, neurology, gastroenterology, respirology, NICU, PICU, endocrinology, palliative care, general pediatrics, and emergency medicine. These new recruits bring not only specialized expertise but also a passion for collaboration, innovation, and mentorship. Their arrival marks a significant step forward in our ability to deliver comprehensive, multidisciplinary care to children and families across Saskatchewan.

Our commitment to provincial outreach continues to grow. We are actively recruiting additional pediatricians to serve in communities throughout the province, working toward a future in which every child can receive exceptional pediatric care as close to home as possible. Through virtual care, outreach clinics, and new collaborative models, we are extending the reach of subspecialty expertise and building stronger local teams to support community-based care. This vision aligns with our goal of a “one province, one team” approach to pediatric health.

A central priority for our department is reconciliation and partnership with Indigenous communities. We are deeply committed to mirroring the efforts of the College of Medicine and the University of Saskatchewan in improving the health of Indigenous children and families. This means strengthening our relationships with First Nations and Métis communities; listening to Indigenous voices in the design and delivery of health services; and embedding cultural safety and humility in all that we do. We are also integrating traditional knowledge and cultural practices into care and education, recognizing that healing and wellness are grounded not only in science but also in community, culture, and respect. Our collective responsibility is to build a health system that honours Indigenous traditions and enables the next generation of children to thrive.

Education remains at the heart of our mission. The Department of Pediatrics plays a vital role in training medical students, residents, and fellows who will carry forward the responsibility of caring for Saskatchewan's children. As the College of Medicine prepares for undergraduate accreditation in 2026, we are working closely with our partners to ensure that our teaching, supervision, and clinical learning environments meet and exceed national standards. This process is not just about accreditation — it is about reaffirming our commitment to educational excellence, innovation, and equity. We will continue to invest in structured teaching, protected learning time, and meaningful mentorship to ensure our learners receive the best possible preparation for careers in pediatrics.

Research and quality improvement continue to drive our pursuit of better outcomes for children. Our department is actively researching new approaches to maternal-child health, mental health, and chronic disease management. We are fostering partnerships across the province and with national and international collaborators, ensuring that Saskatchewan contributes to and benefits from advances in pediatric science. Notably, we are working closely with the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation, the Hospitals of Regina Foundation, Boréal Hospital Foundation, the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation, and other organizations, to further care and facilitate learning opportunities.

Looking forward, our priorities are clear: to strengthen our provincial network, grow our workforce, deepen our partnerships with Indigenous and rural communities, and support our faculty and learners in achieving excellence. Together, we are building a department that lives our values and truly embodies the mission of the University of Saskatchewan and the College of Medicine.

With optimism and gratitude, I thank our faculty, staff, learners, and partners for their dedication to improving the lives of children and families across Saskatchewan. The future of pediatric health in our province is bright—and it will be built through our shared commitment to equity, excellence, and community.

Vision, Mission, and Values

VISION

Healthy children in healthy communities.

MISSION

We strive to provide high quality care for children and their families, as close to home as possible, by fostering discovery through research, supporting the education of health professionals, and advocating to optimize the wellbeing of those with whom we work and serve.

VALUES

Compassion

Compassion is central to our care for children and their families, reflected in our commitment to empathy, kindness, and human connection. It means recognizing the vulnerability of our patients and responding with understanding, support, and a drive to alleviate suffering.

Respect

Respect drives us to value diverse experiences, honour cultural and personal identities, and uphold the dignity and worth of every child in our care. Respect is foundational to our engagement with and service to children, families, colleagues, and communities.

Collaboration

We believe in working across disciplines, institutions, and communities to share knowledge, coordinate services, and achieve the best possible outcomes for children. Collaboration is essential to delivering integrated, effective, and patient-centred care.

Social Accountability

We are committed to serving the health needs of all children in Saskatchewan by addressing inequities in access, outcomes, and care. Social accountability means being responsive to the broader social determinants of health and advocating for systemic change wherever it is needed.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation involves actively working to restore and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities through trust, respect, and shared decision-making. We recognize the importance of Indigenous sovereignty, cultural safety, and the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge systems in how we deliver care and conduct research.

Excellence

We strive to achieve the highest standards in clinical care, education, and research. We are dedicated to continuous improvement, evidence-based practice, and professional integrity to ensure every child receives safe, high-quality, and timely care.

Innovation

Innovation drives our pursuit of better ways to serve children through research, education, system transformation, and the adoption of new technology and treatment methodologies. We foster creativity, curiosity, and openness to new ideas that can improve health outcomes and create more equitable and sustainable models of care.



Clinical Priorities

The Department of Pediatrics' clinical priorities are aimed at developing a unified, equitable, and sustainable model of child health care across Saskatchewan. The focus is on improving access through centralized referrals, virtual and mobile services, and the expansion of provincial programs, while embedding a philosophy of patient- and family-centered care. Knowledge sharing and innovation are central, with emphasis on clinical pathways and the use of Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) and other tools to connect providers. Partnerships with family medicine and First Nations and Métis communities are recognized as critical for culturally responsive, community-driven and culturally responsive solutions. Together, these priorities aim to strengthen capacity, promote wellness and disease prevention, and ensure that high-quality pediatric care is accessible as close to home as possible for all Saskatchewan children.

Philosophy of Care

- Patient-and-family-centered, culturally responsive, and trauma informed care
- One provincial team with shared values and messaging
- Implementation of a stepped-care approach
- Support and strengthen pediatric care in smaller centers

Access to Care

- Centralized referrals
- Simplified access to pediatrician support for community providers
- Expanded use of virtual care and mobile/satellite clinics
- Growth of specialized provincial programs
- Focused recruitment to address the needs of rural and First Nations communities

Knowledge Sharing

- Educate front line providers and provide tailored outreach
- Develop provincial care maps and order sets/pathways
- Build access to digital resources and knowledge sharing tools
- Continuing education opportunities (Pediatric Grand Rounds, Quality Improvement Rounds)

Quality and Innovation

- Establishment of a provincial quality improvement committee
- Integration of AI into pediatric care
- Increased focus on quality improvement initiatives

Partnership Development

- Enhanced collaboration with primary care providers
- Building stronger partnerships with First Nations and Métis
- Explore opportunities to enhance resident education
- Engage community leaders in planning and needs assessments

Research

The Department of Pediatrics' Research Division is centred on driving innovation to address provincial health priorities. Our Vision is that healthy children become healthy adults. We strive to ensure the research is patient-driven, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of children and families across Saskatchewan. The strategy emphasizes strengthening maternal and child health, as too often disparities in maternal health follow into children. This requires addressing social and structural determinants of health, advancing prevention and public health initiatives, and optimizing both acute and chronic illness management. This Province has unique challenges with a vast area to serve and unique populations within. We have developed capacity with a strong focus on Indigenous & Metis partnerships and engagement with rural and remote communities. The Department aims to position itself as a provincial and national leader in pediatric health research, advocating for outstanding and equitable access to health care.

Promoting Healthy Moms and Kids

- Engage families directly to identify priorities and inform culturally sensitive research directions
- Collect and analyze maternal and child health data to establish provincial health registries/platforms for innovation
- Using research platforms to improve outcomes in maternal and pediatric health through clinical and quality improvement initiatives
- Support the BioBank initiative to advance maternal-child health research

Mental and Social Structural Determinants of Health

- Identify and address health disparities among Indigenous, rural/remote, and urban children
- Develop interventions targeting social determinants of health, including mental health, trauma, education, and community-specific needs
- Increase our capacity to engage with communities (i.e. Indigenous communities or rural/remote) to partner and lead innovation
- Enhance partnerships with patient and family groups to co-design research priorities

Public Health and Prevention of Disease

- Expand research for the prevention and treatment of all diseases, but especially those of increased presence in Saskatchewan (i.e. Type 2 Diabetes, Autism, Obstructive Sleep Apnea)
- Expand mental health prevention strategies and trauma-informed care models
- Incorporate health promotion and preventative medicine into education and research streams
- Strengthen advocacy efforts to ensure research findings inform policy and practice

Optimal Acute and Chronic Illness Management

- Develop new care models for disease (i.e. autism research improves supports)
- Advance acute and chronic illness care through integration of AI or electronic-based research tools
- Improve access and outcomes for rural/remote patients through mobile, virtual, and clinic-integrated research
- Build multidisciplinary collaborations across prairie provinces and with health economists to strengthen evidence-based care

Education

Education in the Department of Pediatrics is guided by the commitment to foster a safe, inclusive, and innovative learning environment that supports both faculty and learners in achieving excellence. Short-term efforts focus on strengthening accreditation processes, introducing structured teaching within rotations, and improving the learning environment across sites. Over the next one to two years, the department will prioritize protected learning time, accountability in teaching, revitalized Grand Rounds, and creative approaches such as narrative medicine. Long-term priorities include embedding trauma-informed care, preventive health, and interprofessional collaboration into curricula while broadening exposure to rural and non-urban contexts. Despite barriers such as resident workload, limited time and space for teaching, systemic inequities, and challenges in recognizing teaching contributions, the department benefits from strong enablers, including cohesive UGME/PGME leadership, growing faculty capacity, increased resources, and a record of excellence in CPD and trainee research. Ultimately, success will be measured by accreditation outcomes, learner evaluations, and building a culture that values teaching while ensuring equitable access to high-quality educational experiences across the province.

Optimizing Learner Experience

- Create structured teaching within rotations and support teaching in protected academic time for learners
- Provide protected learning time and minimize resident workload barriers
- Expand rural and non-urban learning opportunities
- Embed trauma-informed care, health promotion, and patient/family-centered care into curriculum

Supporting Faculty

- Increase faculty engagement in accreditation processes/outcomes and curriculum development/implementation
- Provide faculty development through CPD, feedback mechanisms, and onboarding support
- Recognize and reward teaching contributions, both scheduled and non-scheduled
- Support new faculty mentorship and reduce barriers from workload and systemic inequities

Development Training Opportunities

- Provide training in novel methods to deliver medical education
- Expand lecture/topic banks and teaching resources for all CanMEDs competencies
- Encourage collaborative teaching with non-MD educators

Growing Partnerships

- Build stronger ties with allied health and other departmental teams
- Develop partnerships with SHA for guideline and resource dissemination
- Strengthen shared networks, calendars, and educational leads to improve coordination across the province

Building Structure and Support

- Develop clear expectations and standardized evaluation processes for learners and educators
- Improve mechanisms to track teaching contributions (PGME and UGME)
- Ensure educational opportunities are accessible and equitable across training sites
- Support wellness of learners and faculty with regular surveys and structured supports

Faculty Development



Faculty development in the Department of Pediatrics is focused on building a supportive, sustainable, and inclusive environment where all members can advance their careers while contributing to a strong academic community. Priorities include clarifying promotion pathways, strengthening onboarding and mentorship, and creating opportunities for professional growth through CME, leadership training, and QI initiatives. Alongside career advancement, the department is committed to fostering wellness, collegiality, and equity by embedding JEDI/REDI principles, offering retreats and networking events, and recognizing faculty contributions. While challenges such as geographic separation, limited protected time, and balancing professional and personal demands persist, the department will address this through improved communication, recognition, and shared opportunities for connection. Success will be measured by increased promotion and leadership participation, positive wellness outcomes, and greater recognition of milestones, all contributing to a unified provincial faculty community positioned as a leader in pediatric care, education, and research.

Career Growth & Promotion

- Streamline and clarify promotion processes
- Include promotion planning in onboarding and annual reviews
- Recognize and celebrate faculty milestones

Onboarding & Mentorship

- Improved orientation for new faculty
- Formal mentor and peer coaching programs
- CV tracking and support for professional development

Collegiality & Engagement

- Regular retreats, town halls, and networking events
- Strengthen grand rounds participation across sites
- Build a unified provincial faculty community

Wellness & Inclusion

- Wellness initiatives (social, sports, retreats, therapy access)
- Embed JEDI/REDI principles into everyday practice
- Create healthy, respectful working environments

Professional Development & Training

- CME support (PALS, CPR, QI initiatives)
- Training in conflict resolution, advocacy, and healthcare leadership
- Expand opportunities for leadership and research skill-building

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