

# Advancing Health Equity

## Self-Assessment Tool

*There is no better time than now to commit to innovative approaches to addressing barriers and working towards positive change.*



# Acknowledgements

The Health Equity Charter Self-Assessment tool was developed by the **Alliance for Healthier Communities** (AOHC) in line with their Health Equity Charter resolution, endorsed in November 2020.

Partners of **Ottawa Health Teams-Équipe Santé Ottawa** (OHT-ÉSO) have committed to annually reviewing their progress in actioning the OHT-ÉSO Health Equity Charter. To foster this process, the OHT-ÉSO Health Equity Working Group adapted the Alliance's self-assessment tool. We express our sincere gratitude to the AOHC, all project partners, those involved in consultations, and the pilot participants for their valuable contributions.

## **Ontario Health Teams-Équipe Santé Ottawa** **Health Equity Working Group**

**Suzanne Obiorah** - Executive Director, Somerset West Community Health Centre

**Sarah Caspi** – Executive Director, Jewish Family Services

**Bo Turpin** – Executive Director, Upstream Ottawa Mental Health Community Support

**Aleksandra Milosevic** – Engagement Specialist, Ontario Health Teams- Équipe Santé Ottawa

**Shaina Smith** – System Transformation Lead, Ontario Health Teams-Équipe Santé Ottawa

# Introduction

## A Call to Action

The Ottawa Health Team - Équipe Santé envisions a redesigned health system in which people are healthy, well and supported to live in the community, with a focus on the needs of equity-deserving populations, including First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous, Francophone, Black and other racialized communities, 2SLGBTQIA+, and other underserved and underrepresented communities. In order to fight inequities and oppression, it is necessary to examine structures, policies, and programs and work to ensure that systems are fair and equitable for everyone. To facilitate shared responsibility for promoting health equity as the foundation for this health system transformation, the OHT-ÉSO has tailored the Alliance for Healthier Communities' Health Equity Charter Self Assessment Tool to support our partners in assessing their health equity efforts. This approach aligns with the 11 Areas of Action outlined in Ontario Health's Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, and Anti-Racism Framework, which aims to combat racism and discrimination in the healthcare system and improve outcomes for patients, families, and providers.

The Health Equity Charter Self-Assessment Tool is a valuable **resource for identifying strengths, challenges, and actionable steps to advance health equity within our organizations, the communities we serve, and the broader healthcare system.** By refining evidence-based strategies and setting strategic priorities, we aim to ensure equitable access to services and high-quality, appropriate care. The tool offers recommendations for measuring and monitoring equity within organizations, contributing to a comprehensive system response to address identified inequities. Data collected from the survey will inform OHT-ÉSO health equity planning and determine key actions to best support partners in priority settings.

We value the unique contributions of our organizational partners, recognizing that organizations are at different points of their health equity journey. **There is no better time than now to commit to innovative approaches to addressing barriers and working towards positive change.**

# About the Health Equity Charter Self-Assessment Tool<sup>1</sup>



## Why use the Health Equity Charter Self-Assessment Tool?

Advancing health equity is an ongoing process and every organization is at a different point in this journey. The goal of the self-assessment tool is to help OHT-ÉSO partners identify strengths and challenges in their health equity work, as well as develop key actions to help advance health equity in their organizations, in the communities they serve and on a broader system level. It can help inform other areas of work, for instance strategic planning, developing an operational plan or going through an accreditation process.

## Who should use the Health Equity Charter Self-Assessment Tool?

The self-assessment should be completed by executive leadership and staff with guidance from the Board to ensure strategic alignment with organizational goals. It can also be used by leadership and management in your organization to help inform the operational plan or other areas of work.








## OHT-ÉSO role

After completing the self-assessment, organizations are encouraged to submit the Self-Assessment Overview and Initial Assessment Report provided at the end of this tool to OHT-ÉSO. The report will be used to profile examples of the work from different organizations to advance health equity and share them across OHT-ÉSO partnership and with the broader health equity community. Your reports will also help the OHT-ÉSO to identify and develop additional tools and resources.

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<sup>1</sup> The Health Equity Charter Self-Assessment Tool was adapted from the Health Equity Audit: A Self-Assessment Tool developed by the Department of Health and National Health Services in the UK.

## How to Use the Tool

	<p>A <b>series of statements</b> have been written to encourage you to reflect on how you are currently putting the OHT-ÉSO Health Equity Charter into action, and whether there are gaps in the health equity work. Depending on your capacity, you can decide to go through all the statements or focus on a select few.</p>
	<p>There are <b>guidance points</b> which you may like to consider when reflecting on your organization’s performance against each statement.</p>
	<p>The <b>evidence section</b> gives you space to record the assessment of your progress, highlighting strengths and challenges and noting examples.</p>
	<p>A <b>rating scale</b> at the end of each statement enables you to track your progress. We recognize that health equity work is a journey. This section allows you to identify where your organization is on the scale for each statement, and is meant to help you compare your progress from year to year.</p>
	<p>The <b>key areas for action</b> section enables you to record the most relevant and important areas for improvement that you have identified as a result of completing the self-assessment tool.</p>
	<p>The <b>Health Equity Charter Self-Assessment Overview</b> sheet enables you to look at your overall position, and identify key areas of success or areas that may require further work.</p>
	<p>Partners are encouraged to submit the <b>Health Equity Charter Progress Report form</b> after completing the self-assessment to enable joint learning and resource sharing.</p>

<p><b>Make Health Equity a strategic priority</b></p>	<p>Develop a Health Equity profile: Identify local health inequities, gaps and needs</p>	<p>Identify and implement priority actions to help reduce health inequities</p>	<p>Review progress &amp; assess impact</p>
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### Self-Assessment Statement 1

We understand the importance of addressing health inequities and demonstrate organization-wide commitment to advancing health equity.

#### GUIDANCE

CONSIDER, FOR EXAMPLE:

- Do your vision, mission and values reflect commitment to advancing health equity in your organization, the communities you serve and on a broader system level?
- Do you have position statements, policies and practices that reflect commitment to health equity?
- Have you endorsed a Health Equity Charter (e.g., OHT-ÉSO Health Equity Charter, Alliance for Healthier Communities (AOHC) Health Equity Charter, other-please specify)? Have you shared it with your partners and communities (on your website, in your building, in meetings, on joint committees, etc.)
- Do you have a health equity framework and/or plan?
- Do your strategic directions address the barriers to health and wellbeing for your priority populations?
- Do you understand the role of your organization in addressing health inequities and advancing health equity, along with local partners?

#### EVIDENCE

Use this space to record the highlights of your discussions and present evidence to support your decisions. You may find it helpful to think about the particular strengths and weaknesses of your organization. (Use additional space, if required, to capture detailed conversations.)

## OVERALL RATING

There is a high level of understanding of the organization’s role in addressing health inequities. Commitment to advancing health equity is clearly articulated and documented.



1	2	3	4	5
<b>Not true at all:</b> this statement doesn't describe our organization at all	<b>Somewhat true:</b> the work is at its initial stages	<b>Fairly true:</b> the work is progressing well	<b>Mostly true:</b> we've made significant progress but more work is required	<b>Absolutely true:</b> this statement describes our organization very well

## KEY AREAS OF ACTION

Key area of action	Lead	By when	Review date

<p><b>Make Health Equity a strategic priority</b></p>	<p>Develop a Health Equity profile: Identify local health inequities, gaps and needs</p>	<p>Identify and implement priority actions to help reduce health inequities</p>	<p>Review progress &amp; assess impact</p>
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## Self-Assessment Statement 2

The Board and staff are well positioned to launch their inequity in health journey in an effort to offer truly equitable health services.

### GUIDANCE

CONSIDER, FOR EXAMPLE:

- Does your Board reflect the communities your organization serves?
- Do you have human resource policies and practices in place designed to ensure that the diversity of the communities you serve is reflected at all levels of your organization, including volunteers, staff and management?
- Has your Board signed up for any Health Equity training (e.g., Governing for Health Equity training)?
- Are Board and staff members engaged in regular training and reflection activities to examine internal biases and build understanding of structural inequities, systemic racism, colonialism and white supremacy and how they impact your priority populations?
- Is anti-oppression and anti-racism training included in the onboarding process for Board, staff and volunteers?
- Have your Board and staff taken trainings to better understand the needs of and barriers faced by the OHT-ÉSO's priority populations, including First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous, Francophone, Black and other racialized communities, 2SLGBTQIA+, and other underserved and underrepresented communities? Some examples include, but are not limited to: Indigenous Cultural Safety training (offered by the IPHCC, San'yas Indigenous Cultural Training), The Active Offer of French Language Health Services offered by the RMEFNO (available in EN & FR), Kids Come First webinar, Black and other racialized populations (Black Governance and Leadership Project training), 2SLGBTQIA+ (LGBT2SQ Foundations).

### EVIDENCE

Use this space to record the highlights of your discussions and present evidence to support your decisions. You may find it helpful to think about the particular strengths and weaknesses of your organization. (Use additional space, if required, to capture detailed conversations.)

## OVERALL RATING

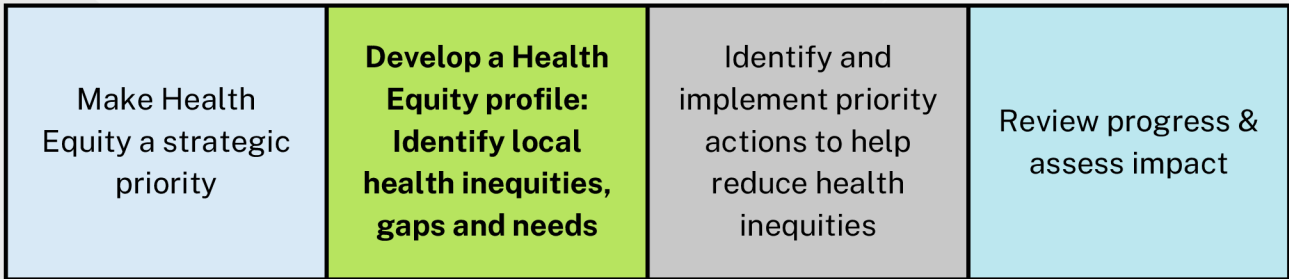
Our organization reflects the communities we serve at every level, including Board, staff and volunteers, who participate in regular trainings to build capacity to advance health equity in the organization and community.



1	2	3	4	5
<p><b>Not true at all:</b> this statement doesn't describe our organization at all</p>	<p><b>Somewhat true:</b> the work is at its initial stages</p>	<p><b>Fairly true:</b> the work is progressing well</p>	<p><b>Mostly true:</b> we've made significant progress but more work is required</p>	<p><b>Absolutely true:</b> this statement describes our organization very well</p>

## KEY AREAS OF ACTION

Key area of action	Lead	By when	Review date



### Self-Assessment Statement 3

We commit to ensuring the collection of high quality socio-demographic and race-based data to understand and document health inequities, gaps and needs in the communities we serve.

#### GUIDANCE

CONSIDER, FOR EXAMPLE:

- Does your organization take all possible steps to ensure that it collects high quality socio-demographic and race-based data? (*SDD Common List provided in the Appendix*)
- Do you analyze the data by priority populations to determine differentiated outcomes to inform planning, outcome evaluation and reporting?
- Is there a required socio-demographic and race-based data report for your Board? How do you use the report to inform your work?
- Does your race-based data collection and analysis follow the OCAP principles (the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access, and possession of data) and also data standards developed by the Anti-Racism Directorate?
- Do you know what factors are driving health inequities in your communities? Do you understand barriers to health care access and determinants of health people in your communities face? (e.g. of community data sources: Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, Wabano Shared Stories, Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition, BHA, SAPACCY/CAMH)
- What other data sources do you use?

#### EVIDENCE

Use this space to record the highlights of your discussions and present evidence to support your decisions. You may find it helpful to think about the particular strengths and weaknesses of your organization. (Use additional space, if required, to capture detailed conversations.)

## OVERALL RATING

We have an in-depth understanding of health inequities, gaps and needs in our communities. We collect high quality data designed to fit with current priorities. We have a high level of data analytical support to inform decision-making.



1	2	3	4	5
<p><b>Not true at all:</b> this statement doesn't describe our organization at all</p>	<p><b>Somewhat true:</b> the work is at its initial stages</p>	<p><b>Fairly true:</b> the work is progressing well</p>	<p><b>Mostly true:</b> we've made significant progress but more work is required</p>	<p><b>Absolutely true:</b> this statement describes our organization very well</p>

## KEY AREAS OF ACTION

Key area of action	Lead	By when	Review date



### Self-Assessment Statement 4

We will use or participate in the development of needs assessment tools to actively engage the people and communities we serve. We commit to identifying actions that will directly help address health inequities and narrow gaps in service delivery.

### GUIDANCE

CONSIDER, FOR EXAMPLE:

- Do you use your needs assessment and data analysis to ensure your programs and services meet the unique needs of the communities you serve and help reduce the gaps in primary health care delivery for your priority populations (e.g. employing established tools such as OCAN data)?
- Do you actively engage the people and communities you serve in making decisions at every level of the organization, including the needs assessment, planning, co-design and delivery of programs and services? How do you ensure the knowledge and expertise of the communities you serve is recognized and used in decision-making?
- Do you ensure your resource allocation and staff training meet the linguistic, cultural and other needs of the diverse communities you serve?
- Does your organization work to build capacity to deliver equitable, trauma-informed, people-centred, and culturally safer care? Do you partner with other organizations that can support you in providing culturally safe care for certain populations (e.g., collaborating with faculty and community organizations such as VTrac Lab to develop tools)?
- Do you work with local partners to help reduce health inequities and narrow gaps in service delivery? Have you identified gaps in partnerships and are working to address them?

### EVIDENCE

Use this space to record the highlights of your discussions and present evidence to support your decisions. You may find it helpful to think about the particular strengths and weaknesses of your organization. (Use additional space, if required, to capture detailed conversations.)

## OVERALL RATING

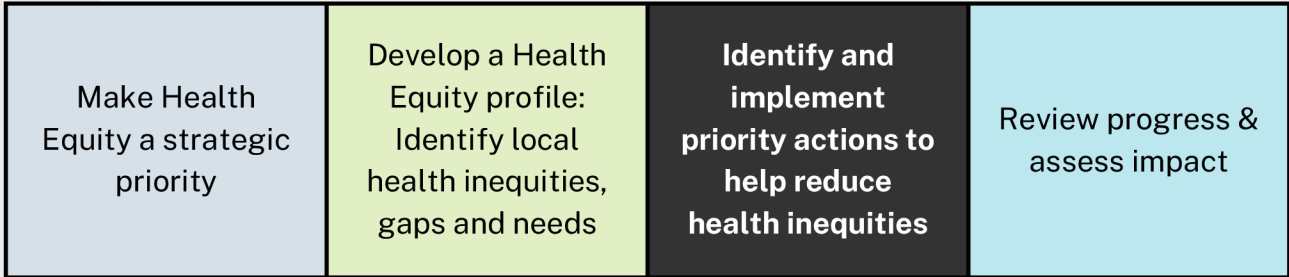
We have identified and agreed on action, based on our needs assessment. Our communities are actively involved in decision-making at every level of our organization and we work closely with local partners to help reduce health inequities.



1	2	3	4	5
<b>Not true at all:</b> this statement doesn't describe our organization at all	<b>Somewhat true:</b> the work is at its initial stages	<b>Fairly true:</b> the work is progressing well	<b>Mostly true:</b> we've made significant progress but more work is required	<b>Absolutely true:</b> this statement describes our organization very well

## KEY AREAS OF ACTION

Key area of action	Lead	By when	Review date



### Self-Assessment Statement 5

We demonstrate our collaboration with the broader community in advancing health equity on a system level and ensuring equity is an over-arching goal of an integrated, high-performing health system.

#### GUIDANCE

CONSIDER, FOR EXAMPLE:

- Are you involved in advocacy with different levels of government to advance public policy responses that will help address the root causes of health inequities in your communities? Do you have an advocacy policy that clearly outlines the roles of Board, staff and volunteers?
- Do you support and collaborate with organizations, community and local advocacy groups that are challenging the social, economic and environmental conditions that cause health inequities for marginalized communities, including Indigenous, Francophone, Black and racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities?
- Do you support broader provincial, national and international movements that work to eliminate health inequities in Ontario and around the world?
- Do you understand your role in addressing systemic racism, especially against Indigenous and Black people, and work to support Indigenous, Black and racialized communities and advance anti-racism and anti-oppression work?
- Do you follow the principles of Indigenous Health in Indigenous Hands (IHIH)? Do you work to build allyship relationships with Indigenous organizations and communities, and support Indigenous-led calls for changes in health policies and practices to be more respectful of the rights and knowledge of Indigenous people?
- Have you reviewed the Black Health Plan, developed by Ontario Health, discussed your organization’s role in moving it forward and agreed on action points?

#### EVIDENCE

Use this space to record the highlights of your discussions and present evidence to support your decisions. You may find it helpful to think about the particular strengths and weaknesses of your organization. (Use additional space, if required, to capture detailed conversations.)

## OVERALL RATING

We have strong partnerships with the broader community to advance health equity on a system level. We are actively involved in advocacy and anti-racism and anti-oppression work. We make every effort to follow the IHIP principles.



1	2	3	4	5
<b>Not true at all:</b> this statement doesn't describe our organization at all	<b>Somewhat true:</b> the work is at its initial stages	<b>Fairly true:</b> the work is progressing well	<b>Mostly true:</b> we've made significant progress but more work is required	<b>Absolutely true:</b> this statement describes our organization very well

## KEY AREAS OF ACTION

Key area of action	Lead	By when	Review date

<p>Make Health Equity a strategic priority</p>	<p>Develop a Health Equity profile: Identify local health inequities, gaps and needs</p>	<p>Identify and implement priority actions to help reduce health inequities</p>	<p><b>Review progress &amp; assess impact</b></p>
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### Self-Assessment Statement 6

We are continuing to measure and track progress through a health inequity analytical continuum and have made Health Equity Self- Assessment a standing Board agenda item.

#### GUIDANCE

CONSIDER, FOR EXAMPLE:

- Do you have evaluation strategies that measure your health equity efforts and health equity results to continually improve your practices?
- How are you involving clients and communities in the evaluation process?
- How do you respond to the insights provided by the evaluation?

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#### EVIDENCE

Use this space to record the highlights of your discussions and present evidence to support your decisions. You may find it helpful to think about the particular strengths and weaknesses of your organization. (Use additional space, if required, to capture detailed conversations.)

## OVERALL RATING

We have been regularly evaluating our health equity efforts, and are committed to ensuring that effective health equity self-assessment process is used to support planning, delivery and evaluation of services.



<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Not true at all:</b> this statement doesn't describe our organization at all</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Somewhat true:</b> the work is at its initial stages</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Fairly true:</b> the work is progressing well</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Mostly true:</b> we've made significant progress but more work is required</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Absolutely true:</b> this statement describes our organization very well</p>
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## KEY AREAS OF ACTION

Key area of action	Lead	By when	Review date

# Health Equity Charter

## Self-Assessment Overview

STATEMENT	Not true at all This statement doesn't describe our organization at all	Somewhat true The work is at its initial stages	Fairly true The work is progressing well	Mostly true We've made significant progress but more work is required	Absolutely true This statement describes our organization very well
<p>We understand the importance of addressing health inequities and demonstrate organization-wide commitment to advancing health equity.</p>					
<p>The Board and Staff are well positioned to launch their inequity in health journey in an effort to offer truly equitable health services.</p>					
<p>We commit to ensuring the collection of high quality socio-demographic and race-based data to understand and document health inequities, gaps and needs in the communities we serve.</p>					
<p>We will use or participate in the development of needs assessment tools to actively engage the people and communities we serve. We commit to identifying actions that will directly help address health inequities and narrow gaps in service delivery.</p>					
<p>We demonstrate our collaboration with the broader community in advancing health equity on a system level and ensuring equity is an overarching goal of an integrated, high-performing health system.</p>					
<p>We are continuing to measure and track progress through the health inequity analytical continuum and have made Health Equity Self-Assessment an standing Board agenda item.</p>					

## Health Equity Charter **Initial Assessment Report**

Partners are encouraged to submit their completed HE report to the OHT-ÉSO to enable joint learning and resource sharing. OHT-ÉSO will use the report to profile examples of the work you are doing to advance health equity and share them across membership and with the broader health equity community through multiple channels. The report will also help identify and develop additional tools and resources.

Organization:

Contact person:

What are the three successes you have achieved advancing health equity in your organization, broader community and on a system level? (200 words or less)

What are the key areas for action you have identified through the Health Equity Self-Assessment process? (200 words or less)

How can OHT-ÉSO further support your Health Equity work?

Other comments/questions

Board Chair or CEO/ED (name, signature):

Date:

Please submit to Aleksandra Milosevic at [a.milosevic@pqchc.com](mailto:a.milosevic@pqchc.com)



Alliance for  
Healthier Communities  
Alliance pour des  
communautés en santé

500-970 Lawrence Avenue West  
Toronto, ON M6A 3B6  
416-236-2539  
[www.AllianceON.org](http://www.AllianceON.org)  
f AllianceON @AllianceON



Ottawa Health Team  
Équipe Santé Ottawa

2529 Carling Ave, 2nd floor,  
Ottawa ON K2B7Z2  
Tel: 613 617 9480  
[www.ottawaoh-t-eso.com](http://www.ottawaoh-t-eso.com)  
in f Ottawa Health Team – Équipe Santé Ottawa

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# Appendix

## Resource List

### Data



- **Government of Ontario Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism**: Provides data collection and analysis standards to monitor systemic racism.
- **Ottawa Health Team – Équipe Santé Ottawa Socio-Demographic Data Collection Initiative**: An initiative focused on collecting socio-demographic data.
- **Ottawa Public Health State of Ottawa’s Health Report 2023**: A comprehensive report on the health status of Ottawa’s population in 2023.
- **Ottawa Public Health Mental Health of Ottawa’s Black Community Report 2020**: A report focusing on the mental health of Ottawa’s Black community in 2020.
- **Ottawa Public Health Measuring Trends in Health Inequalities in Ottawa, 2019**: A report on health inequality trends in Ottawa in 2019.
- **Ottawa Neighbourhood Study**: Provides data on strengths and challenges for each neighbourhood in Ottawa.

### Governance



- **Governing for Health Equity Training**: A training program focused on governing for health equity.
- **Black Governance and Leadership Project**: A project aimed at improving Black governance and leadership.
- **First Nations Information Governance Centre The First Nations Principles of OCAP**: A resource on the First Nations principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP).

# Appendix

## Resource List

### Population Specific Resources



- **Indigenous Primary Health Care Council (PHCC) Indigenous Cultural Safety Training**: A training program on Indigenous cultural safety.
- **San'yas Anti-Racism Indigenous Cultural Safety Training Program**: A program offering anti-racism Indigenous cultural safety training.
- **Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health in Partnership with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition Share Your Story Indigenous-Specific Racism in Health Care Across the Champlain Region**: A report on Indigenous-specific racism in health care.
- **AOHC Indigenous Health in Indigenous Hands, April 2019**: A policy resolution on Indigenous health.
- **AOHC Black Health Strategy**: A strategy focused on Black health.
- **Ontario Health A Black Health Plan for Ontario**: A health plan for the Black population in Ontario.
- **The Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario The Active Offer of French Language Health Services**: A resource on the active offer of French language health services.
- **The Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario Winning Strategies**: Provides winning strategies for French health services.
- **Rainbow Health Ontario LGBT2SQ Foundations**: A resource focused on LGBT2SQ health foundations.

### Health Equity Charters



- **Ottawa Health Team – Équipe Santé Ottawa Health Equity Charter**
- **Alliance for Healthier Communities Health Equity Charter**
- **Ontario Health Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism Framework**