

July 2025



# VICCIY Newsletter



## 2nd Annual Youth Summit

We hosted a two-day Provincial Youth Wellness Summit in Saskatoon on May 14 and 15th. 63 high school students and 18 chaperones from across Saskatchewan came together to explore mental health and well-being through cultural connection, innovative programming, and community support.

Youth participated in three breakout workshops aligned with the four dimensions of well-being— mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. Sessions included Cree language, play therapy, traditional hunting practices, beading, self-advocacy, journaling, financial literacy, and playing football with the Saskatchewan Roughriders. Facilitators reported strong engagement and enthusiasm throughout.

Chaperones also took part in dedicated wellness sessions, which were well-received and contributed to a supportive environment for all attendees.

A full summit report will be available September 2025.



# JOIN US FOR PHASE 2 OF THE VICCIY INITIATIVE



The **VICCIY Initiative** supports Indigenous youth well-being through culturally responsive care, language and tradition preservation, and customized virtual reality (VR) resources for rural, remote, and northern communities.

We are looking for schools to join a **6-month trial** using an **interactive VR platform** during the **2025/2026** school year, building on insights from the Provincial Youth Wellness Summit to help youth strengthen wellness and coping strategies.

## What's Involved

- Partner with VICCIY for a **live-time VR trial (Oct 2025 – Apr 2026)** to support youth connection and well-being.
- Up to **8 schools** will be selected.
- Each school will identify **1–2 community wellness champions** to facilitate the participation of **4–6 high school students**.



## Role of Community Wellness Champions

**Each school must commit 1-2 staff or community members** (e.g. chaperone, educator, guidance counsellor, trusted adult). Wellness Champions will help recruit youth participants and facilitate VR sessions and wellness assessments in their communities. Equipment & training provided.

**Training & Support** includes a **two-day gathering** will be held **September 16-17** to train and prepare Champions.

- Focus on building relationships
- Learning how to use the technology,
- Self-care opportunities for champions

## Benefits for Schools & Youth

- ✓ Promote youth mental health and wellness
- ✓ Build skills in innovative technology
- ✓ Strengthen community connections
- ✓ Receive comprehensive support for the VICCIY team

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED?

Interested in partnering or want more information?

Contact us at: [vicciy@saskpolytech.ca](mailto:vicciy@saskpolytech.ca)

Limited to **8 partnering schools**



## VICCIY Presentation at the Global Collaboration at IHI BMJ Forum on Quality and Safety

Last month, Lindsey Boechler, Research Manager with the Centre for Health Research, Innovation and Scholarship (CHRIS), had the honour of attending the IHI BMJ International Forum on Quality and Safety in Healthcare in Utrecht, Netherlands. The event brought together global health leaders and changemakers to share innovative approaches to improving care quality and patient safety.

The presentation talked about the experiences of engaging in community-based research and delved into the potential this initiative holds in pushing the boundaries of a virtual presence in the domain of mental health care.

### Objectives of the presentation included:

- Recognize the importance of partnerships when engaging in research with Indigenous communities.
- Discuss the potential benefits of incorporating VR to enhance mental health care in rural and remote Indigenous communities.
- Consider potential ways of integrating culture and tradition within innovative approaches to mental health care.

# EQUICARES TEAM PROJECT

WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD A HEALTHIER FUTURE!



**Recognizing the synergistic strengths between our projects, we have started collaborating with EQUICARES to strategically align our efforts and advance youth mental health and wellness initiatives on a global scale.**

## EQUICARES PROJECT

**EQUICARES** improves access to sustainable mental health and care services for people in vulnerable situations through research, co-creation, and policy solutions. The project applies innovative methodologies, including an advanced Levesque framework, Computational Social Sciences, and cost-analysis techniques to assess inequalities and design effective solutions. Using digital ethnography,

**EQUICARES** maps and evaluates innovative mental health solutions, compiling insights in a dedicated Atlas for policymakers. Piloting in 8 areas across 7 countries, it engages communities through Smart Health Labs to co-design and implement solutions.

**EQUICARES** also introduces an AI-based Assistant to enhance digital literacy and mental health access. The project tests the impact of its solutions, replicates successful models in 4 additional regions, and provides evidence on the cost of inaction. Finally, the Inclusive Mental Health & Care Policy Dashboard ensures sustainability and long-term policy adoption.

**EQUICARES** is shaping a future where mental health services are inclusive, accessible, and innovative.

## Thank you to our 2025 Summit sponsors:



## Message from the VICCIY TEAM:

Wishing everyone a great and safe summer remembering to always protect and take care of your mental health!

[Link to Saskpolytech Wellness Supports](#)