

For Immediate Release

Cough* Chronic Disease Management *Cough

January 23, 2020 – The Ontario government announced that the province’s health care system would be transformed into one that is more efficient and appropriate for all residents, however, Northern Ontario has needs and priorities that differ from those elsewhere.

Spinning Our Wheels? Chronic Disease Management as a Health Policy Priority for Northern Ontario examines the management of chronic disease in Northern Ontario and discusses reforms to the health care system that address the unique needs of Northern Ontarians in access to and delivery of effective chronic disease care.

“Professional isolation, increased client caseloads, and decreased access to continuing education opportunities are just some of the challenges Northern health professionals face.” Says authors Christina McMillan Boyles RN, Zoe Higgins, Celisse Olivia Bibr and Nabina Sharma all PhD students. “As a result, health care professionals tend to choose to work in larger centres, such as Sudbury or Thunder Bay.”

The authors discuss the need to think about best practices and models of care that would benefit those with chronic conditions. For example, they point to the importance of an upstream approach that addresses the root causes of or contributing factors of an illness while also accounting for the effects of social determinants of health such as income, housing, education, food security, race, and gender.

As well, another specific approach they suggest is **INSPIRED**: **I**mplementing a **N**ovel and **S**upportive **P**rogram of **I**ndividualized care for patients and families living with **R**espiratory **D**isease. While this model is operating in Ontario, none are implemented in Northern Ontario. While there are certainly barriers that may have prevented this approach from being utilized in the past in the North (e.g. geography), it could certainly be considered in hubs such as Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, and Sudbury.

Generally, policymakers must continue to prioritize chronic disease management and health services organization in Northern Ontario. If the barriers Northern Ontarians face because of health disparity are resolved, this will not only induce a better quality of life but will ultimately also reduce overall health care spending.

To read, *Spinning Our Wheels? Chronic Disease Management as a Health Policy Priority for Northern Ontario* click here : <https://www.northernpolicy.ca/chronic-disease-management>

Media Interviews: Author Christina McMillan Boyles is available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

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About Northern Policy Institute:

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.