

# International Journal of Population Data Science

Journal Website: [www.ijpds.org](http://www.ijpds.org)



## Growing our Own Epidemiologists: our Journey towards Data Sovereignty. The RECLAIM project and Mobile Training Institutes for First Nations in Manitoba, Canada

Sidney Leggett<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Wanda Phillips-Beck<sup>1</sup>, Leona Star<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Jillian Waruk<sup>1</sup>, Mabel Horton<sup>1</sup>, Sherry Copenace<sup>1</sup>, Doris Young<sup>1</sup>, and Stephanie Sinclair<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>FNHSSM, Winnipeg, Canada

To advance First Nations (FN) data sovereignty in Manitoba by developing and implementing FN-specific training initiatives that build community capacity in epidemiology, biostatistics, data analysis, and data utilization. The First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM) established a regional training institute, youth training programs, and a mobile training lab designed to support FN leaders and community members in developing data skills grounded in FN methods and analytic frameworks. All training is FN-specific, recognizing the distinct policy and data contexts of First Nations in Canada. Development and facilitation have been guided by FNHSSM's Grandmother's Circle, with curriculum tailored through collaboration with Knowledge Keepers and local guest speakers to ensure cultural relevance and community alignment. In 2026, the mobile training lab will be piloted in

FN communities to further enhance access and adaptability. These training initiatives strengthen community-level capacity, reduce reliance on external entities to conduct FN analyses, and support communities in asserting control over their data through the use of FN tools and frameworks. Equipped with these skills, trained individuals can participate meaningfully in data interpretation and decision-making and collaborate with external partners on their own terms. By building robust, community-driven data capacity, FNHSSM's training initiatives promote FN data sovereignty and support communities in accessing and applying their own data to inform resource planning, respond to outbreaks and pandemics, and advocate for social justice where data already exists. This work reflects a transformative pathway for FN self-determination in data governance and public health.

