

# Call for Papers

Building Inclusive Health Systems to Advance Health Equity across Canada

March 25, 2026

Health equity starts with systems built on inclusive policies and accessible services, and attaining high quality healthcare in a timely manner as needed (Statistics Canada, 2025). Yet, many Canadians continue to struggle to access the healthcare they need, nationally. Equity-deserving communities are particularly hard hit by health care access. For example, previous data from the Canadian Community Health Survey found that people with disabilities, racialized immigrants, and 2SLGBTIQ+ Canadians were more likely to report unmet health care needs than the general Canadian population (Pucchio et al., 2025; Lin & Fang, 2022; Hickey et al., 2023). Collectively, they faced barriers to access primary and specialist healthcare, including prolonged wait times to get access to the health services they needed, a lack of resources to afford services, and discrimination in health care settings (Pucchio et al., 2025; Lin & Fang, 2022; Hickey et al., 2023). Moreover, reluctance to use health services can vary across different ethnic groups due to cultural barriers, stigma, and systemic racism (Chiu et al., 2018). Therefore, we must consider the compounding effects of intersecting social determinants of health and the unique barriers community members face in accessing the Canadian healthcare system as we transform our health systems for greater inclusivity.

The aim of this symposium is to bring together emerging graduate students, researchers and professionals attempting to address health inequities through research and policy. It begins with the question: **What does building an inclusive health system look like for all Canadians?** We invite graduate students from across Canada to present their work addressing inclusive health system transformations, including those that focus on patient/client outcomes, professional research, and policy reform. Key question areas to consider include:

- How do we account for intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination that equity-deserving groups face that exacerbate healthcare inequities?
- How should health system transformations take place in urban settings, where accessibility to healthcare may be limited by longer wait times, unavailable physicians, or transportation costs?
- As we map out the development of more inclusive health systems, how do we ensure sustainability in the transformations?

The symposium will take place on March 25, 2026, at the Toronto Metropolitan University, within the “Dish With One Spoon” traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas, and Haudenosaunee peoples. This year’s symposium will feature a keynote by Dr. Michelle Murti, the City of Toronto’s Medical Officer of Health and leader of Toronto Public Health. A professional research panel will also be conducted in the afternoon, to welcome diverse perspectives and engaging discussions from community and public health leaders.

Awards and prizes will be presented at the symposium. Students will vote on the **Best Oral Presentation** and **Best Poster Presentation**.

The following prizes will be awarded:

- **Best Paper Award:** \$500, which includes a five-session mentorship with a researcher to support the paper through to publication
- **Best Poster Award:** \$300

### **How to Apply**

We welcome students to submit abstracts for both completed and working papers that align with the symposium theme. To apply for the symposium, please submit a document with the following by **February 20, 2026 by 5 PM EST**:

- Paper title
- Abstract (300-word limit)
- Indicate whether you would like to present an oral presentation (20-min max) or poster presentation.

Submissions should be emailed to: [doe3@torontomu.ca](mailto:doe3@torontomu.ca)

## References

- Chiu M., Amartey A., Wang X., Kurdyak P. (2018). Ethnic differences in mental health status and service utilization: A population-based study in Ontario, Canada. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 63(7), 481-491. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0706743717741061>
- Hickey, P. M., Best, L. A., & Speed, D. (2024). Access to Healthcare and Unmet Needs in the Canadian Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual Population. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 71(14), 3276–3294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2023.2287034>
- Lin, S., Fang, L.. (2023). Chronic care for all? The intersecting roles of race and immigration in shaping multimorbidity, primary care coordination, and unmet health care needs among older Canadians, *The Journals of Gerontology*, 78(2), 302–318. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbac125>
- Pucchio, A. M. R., Stranges, S., & Ali, S. (2025). Disability and unmet need for health care in Canada: Findings from the Canadian Community Health Survey. *Disability and Health Journal*, 18(4), 101846. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2025.101846>
- Statistics Canada. (2025). *Timely access to primary care provider*. <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/hub-carrefour/quality-life-qualite-vie/health-sante/timely-access-access-rapide-eng.htm>