



Indigenous Health Clinics: A Model for True Progress

Québec City, March 21, 2024 – Over one hundred experts and professionals from the Native Friendship Centres and the public health network gathered at the Indigenous Health Governance Forum on March 20 and 21 in Québec City. Organized by the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement, the event highlighted the progress made in recent years via the Friendship Centre healthcare clinics, which draw on the realities of urban Indigenous people and address specific health issues in offering their services.

Well ahead of its time, the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement made cultural safety a key factor in its fight against inequalities and defense of urban Indigenous people's rights not only in health care but also in education, housing, employability and justice. Co-developed with the Québec public health network, the Indigenous health clinic model prioritizes the requisite needs and solutions to truly improve Indigenous people's socio-economic conditions.

The Forum included approximately one dozen conferences, panels and workshops given by community, scientific, academic and government players on the following topics:

- The necessity of the healing process on the path toward health
- The various wellness strategies Native Friendship Centres have implemented
- The issues and challenges involved in rolling out primary care services
- The health inequities and the importance of working from a holistic health perspective

Relevant and safe care stemming from crucial cooperation

Fifteen years after the opening of the first innovative clinic in Val-d'Or, eight clinics now provide care tailored to First Peoples' lived experience (in Lanaudière, La Tuque, Maniwaki, Montréal, Québec City, Trois-Rivières and Val-d'Or), and three more are being developed (in Chibougamau, Senneterre and Sept-Îles).

Over the past few years, the Government of Québec has supported various actions that fill gaps in services for Indigenous people, notably via close collaboration with the integrated health and social services centres (CISSS) and integrated university health and social services centres (CIUSSS), as well as a \$27M investment announced in 2021. With the RCAAQ's support and documented knowledge, the Friendship Centres have developed a range of culturally safe health services. The Centres provide these services in their facilities to offer a safe and culturally appropriate environment.



Quote:

“Though our commitment to promoting the health and wellness of urban Indigenous people continues to be a significant challenge to fulfil, the Indigenous health clinics show how successful collaboration can lead to real progress. Friendship Centres are the best adapted and most appropriate organizations to provide health and social services to Indigenous people in urban areas. And, in fact, the Centres’ government bodies already have culturally relevant and safe infrastructures in place.”

—Tanya Sirois, Executive Director, Regroupement des centres d’amitié autochtones du Québec

About the Regroupement des centres d’amitié autochtones du Québec

The Regroupement des centres d’amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) is made up of a network of 11 Friendship Centres and 3 points of service that offer Indigenous people culturally relevant and safe services that contribute to the harmony and reconciliation between peoples in Quebec cities. The Native Friendship Centres are the largest urban service infrastructure for Indigenous people, offering a range of integrated services in a variety of sectors, including health, social services, social inclusion, education, employability, early childhood and youth.

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