



REGROUPEMENT  
DES CENTRES D'AMITIÉ  
AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC

# FRONTLINE HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

Quebec Native Friendship  
Centre Movement



## Background

In Quebec, Indigenous cultures and languages are still too often overlooked, and the Indigenous presence in urban areas poorly understood. Many Indigenous people continue to experience racism and discrimination in cities.

In 2021, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux (MSSS) recognized and supported the development of frontline health and wellness services for Indigenous people in urban areas, in continuity with the clinics the Native Friendship Centres have been setting up since 2008. The RCAAQ was tasked with conducting a provincial assessment.

## Inspiring urban Indigenous governance

The RCAAQ and its Native Friendship Centres are strong models of self-determinant Indigenous governance in urban settings.

As a whole, they

- support collective decision-making processes rooted in Indigenous values,
- foster visibility and recognition of Indigenous Peoples in urban spaces, and
- contribute to sharing and passing down Indigenous knowledge, languages and worldviews.

## Accessible, integrated services

Native Friendship Centres offer a full range of integrated health and wellness services, including:

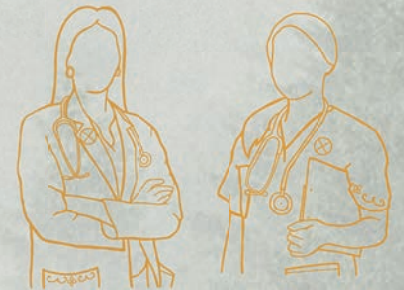
- Medical, psychosocial and nursing visits
- Traditional treatments and cultural activities
- Accompaniment, service navigation and administrative support
- Transportation, support in finding opportunities and activities on the land



**The Movement currently has**

**8 Indigenous health clinics**

and other projects are being developed.



**In 2024,**

health professionals served

**OVER 2,500**

**First Nations members and Inuit**  
in Native Friendship Centres.



## Culturally safe environments that build trust

By offering services directly in our Friendship Centres, Indigenous health clinics reduce the barriers to access. They help people who are estranged or distrustful of health services develop trusting relationships with professionals, in a familiar, respectful and culturally reassuring setting.

Native Friendship Centres serve people of all nations and ages every day, often in several languages. They respond to needs that go unmet elsewhere, and they complement the public health and social services network through a care continuum.

## A common, culturally rooted approach

The Native Friendship Centres' approach draws on:

- An Indigenous vision of health and wellness
- The importance given to Indigenous languages and cultures
- A family-centred and intergenerational focus
- A strong Indigenous membership in teams and governing bodies
- Flexible services tailored to the specific realities and needs of Indigenous people in the cities where they are delivered

## Working together to reduce inequalities

Collaboration with the Quebec network happens against a backdrop of a colonial past. When Native Friendship Centres are actively involved in decision-making and service management, collaboration can reduce inequalities and strengthen cultural safety.

The most productive partnerships

- are open to change and innovation,
- recognize Indigenous expertise,
- respect Indigenous self-determination, and
- leave room for trust-based relationships and learning on both sides.

## About the evaluation

This summary draws on data collected by the RCAAQ between June 2021 and December 2024, as part of a provincial assessment of frontline health and wellness services.

Source: Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec [RCAAQ]. (2024). Financial support program to improve access to culturally safe frontline services for urban Indigenous people. Evaluation Report and Provincial Activity Report.

