

## **Provincial Elections: The RCAAQ Invites Party Leaders to See the Impact of Indigenous Health Clinics**

**Wendake, September 12, 2026** – During the provincial election campaign, the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) is inviting the leaders of Quebec's political parties to visit one of the Indigenous health clinics in its network to see firsthand its results for First Nations members and Inuit living in urban areas. This invitation aims to inform leaders about the solutions by and for Indigenous people that improve their access to care, build their trust in the health system and help reduce persistent health disparities.

### **Health inequalities call for immediate action**

Indigenous people continue to face significant challenges in getting the care and services they need, including administrative barriers, discrimination and the difficult navigation of the public healthcare system. Extensively documented by the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec (the Viens Commission), these difficulties are often compounded by multiple needs and complex life paths, making access to culturally safe services and customized support all the more essential. The Indigenous health clinics in the Friendship Centre network are a concrete response to many of the Viens Commission findings and recommendations.

### **Solutions that deliver**

The Friendship Centres have been developing innovative approaches that tangibly improve the wellness of First Nations members and Inuit in urban areas. Key partners to the provincial healthcare system, the Centres provide services that are grounded in Indigenous realities and that foster trust, increase accessibility and improve continuity of care. Today, the network includes 11 Centres offering health and wellness services, as well as 8 Indigenous health clinics. Every year, thousands of people receive support that aids their care journey, improves medical follow-up and reduces persistent barriers within the healthcare system.

The clinics reach people who would otherwise have difficulty accessing services. By focusing on prevention and support, the Friendship Centres reduce continuity of care failures and ease pressure on the public system. The results speak to the effectiveness of the approach and the importance of continued development so that this initiative may benefit even more people.

Although health is a priority, the RCAAQ points out that urban Indigenous populations also have needs in other essential sectors, such as justice, education, housing and social development, which all directly impact Indigenous health and wellness. Friendship Centres are community-based service hubs and they provide supports that bring stability and curb vulnerability. Given these intersectional needs, visiting the clinics will also help party leaders better understand the importance of a holistic approach to improving the realities of urban Indigenous communities.

### **Quote:**

"We're inviting party leaders to come see for themselves, meet our teams and hear from people experiencing firsthand the realities that these clinics work to improve. Every day, our Indigenous health clinics demonstrate that it is possible to provide care that is accessible, culturally safe and grounded in First Nations and Inuit realities. We want to share these promising solutions and discuss how to strengthen them so that even more people can benefit."

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

## Highlights

- 11 Friendship Centres offer health and wellness services
- 8 Indigenous health clinics are in operation
- 28 healthcare professionals, including doctors and nurses, work in this network
- More than 3,000 people receive care in our clinics every year
- More than 7,000 psychosocial interventions performed out last year
- More than 800 appointments in the public network were accompanied
- The life expectancy of Indigenous individuals is seven to eight years shorter than non-Indigenous people.

## About the RCAAQ

For 50 years, the RCAAQ has been a bridge between urban Indigenous communities and public institutions. It has 11 members with Friendship Centres and service points in 14 cities across Quebec, forming the largest network of services for Indigenous people in cities. The RCAAQ supports its affiliated Centres in developing solutions, programs and infrastructure that promote the wellness, self-determination and empowerment of urban Indigenous communities in Quebec.

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