



Anishnawbe Health Foundation

Anishnawbe Health Toronto Celebrates Grand Opening of New Indigenous Health Centre A Tangible Step Toward Reconciliation and Culturally Safe Health Care

Toronto, ON — June 5, 2025 — Today, Anishnawbe Health Toronto (AHT) celebrates the grand opening of its new health centre in the heart of the West Don Lands - a space intentionally designed by and for the Indigenous community. Blending Traditional Indigenous healing with Western medical care, the centre at 425 Cherry Street marks a major milestone in Indigenous-led healthcare and stands as a powerful expression of reconciliation and cultural reclamation.

In a city where nearly 90,000 Indigenous people live - 87% of whom are below Canada's low-income line - this unified, culturally grounded centre is a vital investment in Indigenous health and well-being. It is also a direct response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #22, which urges the integration of Indigenous healing practices in healthcare systems.

Anishnawbe Health Toronto is the city's only fully accredited Community Health Centre governed by Indigenous leadership, and among the few in Canada with full-time Traditional Healers on staff. Its integrated Circle of Care model brings together physicians, nurses, mental health counsellors, social workers, and Traditional Healers to deliver coordinated, culturally safe care rooted in Indigenous values.

"This Centre is a space of healing, pride, and connection," says Michael Milward, Interim Executive Director of the Anishnawbe Health Foundation. "With the support of our donors, partners, and community, we're building a future where Indigenous people can access care grounded in culture and ceremony. This is more than a health centre - it's a powerful act of reclamation, restoring space for Indigenous presence, knowledge, and healing in the heart of the city."

For more than 35 years, Anishnawbe Health Toronto has been a vital lifeline for the city's urban Indigenous community. It began in a small downtown office and later operated out of three makeshift spaces - including a former bank and Victorian residential homes - to meet growing demand. Even in those limited spaces, AHT established Toronto's first public sweat lodge over 17 years ago.

The new Centre realizes the long-held vision of the late Elder Joe Hester: a unified space where culture, ceremony, and care come together. It is rooted in the teachings of Traditional Healers, Elders, and Medicine People, and guided by an Indigenous understanding of the social determinants of health. AHT supports clients facing trauma, homelessness, chronic illness, and addiction. Its holistic approach fosters dignity, belonging, and cultural connection.

"Our government is making historic investments to ensure people of all ages can access the care they need, when they need it, no matter where they live," said Sylvia Jones, Ontario's

Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “Our investment of over \$31 million to help build the new Anishnawbe Health Toronto Centre will break down barriers to connect more Indigenous people and families in Toronto to holistic, culturally sensitive traditional healing that better supports their physical, spiritual, emotional and mental well-being.”

From its design to its services, the Centre powerfully affirms the reclamation of Indigenous identity and wellness. Inspired by traditional teachings and ceremonies, the building features a shawl-like exterior with a fringe motif and a light-filled atrium that opens to the morning sun - connecting occupants to the land, sky, and natural rhythms of the Earth. Its architecture and programming reflect Indigenous values and foster healing, learning, and community connection.

Features include:

- A Traditional Medicine Area and traditional healing spaces
- Ceremonial Spaces and a sweat lodge
- An Indigenous Peoples Landscape with Indigenous plants, healing gardens, and therapeutic outdoor spaces
- Indigenous artwork throughout the interior and exterior
- Expanded group meeting and counselling rooms for sharing circles and programs
- A Child, Family and Youth Unit with play therapy and assessment space
- A teaching kitchen, physiotherapy studio, and space for wellness programs
- Palliative Care and programming for Two Spirit and LGBTQ clients

This project was made possible through the support of the City of Toronto, Waterfront Toronto, the Government of Ontario, and development partners Dream, Kilmer Group, and Tricon Residential. Special thanks go to The Krawczyk Family Foundation, whose lead gift helped bring this vision to life.

About Anishnawbe Health Toronto and Anishnawbe Health Foundation

Anishnawbe Health Toronto (AHT) is a fully accredited Community Health Centre governed by Indigenous leadership and dedicated to providing holistic, culturally safe care for Indigenous people in Toronto. For more than 35 years, AHT has been the only provider of western medical services and traditional healing services to a rapidly growing, urban Indigenous community. For more information, visit www.aht.ca.

Anishnawbe Health Foundation (AHF) is a registered charity that supports the work of Anishnawbe Health Toronto. AHF has raised nearly \$10 million to support the new home for AHT and programs to foster the reclamation and restoration of traditional healing practices at the new centre. For more information, www.supportanishnawbe.ca

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