

\$27M in funding from Quebec

Historic Recognition from the Government of Québec, Following 15 Years of Joint Efforts

Val-d'Or, May 28, 2021 — Today's announcement of \$27 million in provincial funding is an acknowledgement of long-standing efforts by the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre (VDNFC) and the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) to set up the first Indigenous health clinic in Quebec. This investment is not only a major step forward in the collaboration between the provincial health network and services for Indigenous people, it also affirms First Nations specificities in front-line healthcare and social services.

In brief

- The \$27 million in funding from the Government of Québec is broken down as follows:
 - \$12 million to pursue the VDNFC's Indigenous health clinic initiative
 - \$15 million to improve front-line services for the urban Indigenous populations served by the Native Friendship Centres
- Operating since 2011, the Indigenous health clinic is a concrete example of the successful partnership between the VDNFC and the CISSS Abitibi-Témiscamingue. It has improved access to care in the region in a way that takes Indigenous determinants of wellness into consideration.
 - In addition to its provision of care and various health services (routine and perinatal care, disease prevention, health promotion, screening, etc.), the clinic also offers psychosocial, community and cultural services, and traditional healing. Its work encompasses the preservation of cultural identity in Indigenous children, mental health support, anti-addiction services, assistance for clients with intellectual disabilities, the creation of healthy and safe environments, and the promotion of social and citizen participation.
- The Indigenous health clinic model will lead all Native Friendship Centres to reap the benefits of VDNFC's knowledge and forge links between the various actors in the field. These services are part of an Indigenous approach and knowledge.

Cultural security: Reducing gaps and inequalities

Not only will the announced funding help restore Indigenous people's confidence in the provincial health system by renewing and revisiting this latter's spectrum of healthcare and social services in the community, it also firmly anchors Indigenous cultural and social realities in the services of the public health system. The RCAAQ and the VDNFC are pleased that our society is taking concrete steps to build the wellness and improve the health and living conditions on urban Indigenous people in Québec.

Social innovation: Building bridges and trust

The province's financial contribution paves the way for greater collaboration between the public health network and the Native Friendship Centres, who are key players in the provision of front-line services to urban Indigenous people. This model of social innovation will orient best practice among health and social service stakeholders and help build the bridges needed to foster better understanding and inclusiveness among various partners.

Quotes:

“Launched over 10 years ago, our Indigenous health clinic is the result of incredible work between the Val-d’Or Native Friendship Centre and the CISSS de l’Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Today’s announcement of the government’s financial commitment recognizes that it is indeed possible to innovate to maintain the overall wellness and health of Indigenous people. Solutions exist and we are proud to be a strong pillar in developing care that puts cultural safety and trust first.”

—Oscar Kistabish, Chair, VDNFC

“We have been working to improve quality of life for urban Indigenous people for five decades now, to promote Indigenous cultures and build bridges between peoples. Today, we pool our efforts with those of the public health network to develop and consolidate the front-line services provided in the Native Friendship Centres.”

—Philippe Meilleur, Chair, RCAAQ

About the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec

The RCAAQ represents 10 Native Friendship Centres in the following Quebec cities: Chibougamau, Joliette, La Tuque, Maniwaki, Montréal, Québec City, Senneterre, Sept-Îles, Trois-Rivières and Val-d’Or. For 50 years, the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement has advocated for the rights and interests of Indigenous citizens in Quebec cities through their continuum of frontline services. The mission of the Friendship Centres is to improve the quality of life of urban Indigenous people, promote culture and build bridges between peoples.

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