

For release

Press release



Inauguration of the Mikinakw mobile clinic

## Mikinakw: the First Indigenous Mobile Clinic to open in the Lanaudière Region

**Joliette, June 13, 2024** – The Centre d'amitié autochtone de Lanaudière (CAAL) announced a unique initiative in Quebec today with the inauguration of the first mobile clinic by and for Indigenous people. The [Mikinakw mobile clinic](#) will help meet the intervention, education and holistic health needs of Lanaudière's Indigenous community, right in their own neighbourhoods.

### A plethora of services throughout Lanaudière

The Mikinakw mobile clinic will offer a wide range of services in a number of public locations near neighbourhoods with a large number of Indigenous families in Saint-Michel-des-Saints in the southern part of the Lanaudière region.

It will provide **medical care** to people living in isolation. Outreach workers will create trust-based relationships to **support** people facing **psychosocial issues** like psychological distress. The Mikinakw mobile clinic will also expand **educational services and parental supports** to ensure children's optimal development.

Health and social services professionals, educational tutors and traditional healers will be available to work with people of all ages.

Members of the Indigenous community can use the Mikinakw mobile clinic services free of charge. Opening hours and locations will vary by season and will be listed on the CAAL website.

### Partners

The Mikinakw mobile clinic required an initial investment of \$300,000 and expects annual operating costs of \$40,000. This funding has been provided by a number of partners, including the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtone du Québec (RCAAQ) and the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC).

### Travelling artwork

The exterior of the mobile clinic showcases the work of artist Eruoma Awashish and eight children who attend the CAAL. The young people took part in an eight-week art program geared toward helping them express pride in their identity and culture through the arts.

### Cultural safety

The clinic is a response to Indigenous people's limited access to public health and social services, which was exacerbated by the pandemic and growing mistrust of public institutions. Despite efforts to partner with the CISSS, families remain isolated and students are still feeling the impacts.

Similar to the Government of Québec, our aim is to offer safe healthcare to all First Nations and Inuit while moving toward self-governance in order to have a profound influence on Indigenous living conditions.

## Quotes

“Cultural safety in health services for the First Nations and the Inuit is a priority for our government. By tailoring care to Indigenous realities, we help improve access to the services offered by healthcare institutions. The Centre d’amitié autochtone de Lanaudière is an important partner for us, and this new mobile clinic is a fine example of that. My hope is that it will put the Atikamekw at ease by accessing culturally appropriate health care.”

—Ian Lafrenière, Minister Responsible for Relations with the First Nations and the Inuit

“The creation of the Mikinakw mobile clinic is a major step forward for members of Indigenous communities. It will now be easier to reach this clientele and meet its needs. I applaud the CAAL’s initiative and wish them great success.”

—François St-Louis, Member of the National Assembly for Joliette

“This innovative project is a sign of real progress in public health since it meets a pressing need. I’m convinced that this initiative will have a significant, positive impact on the wellness of Indigenous people in the Lanaudière region.”

—Pierre-Luc Bellerose, Mayor of Joliette

“I am extremely proud to see Mikinakw come to fruition. It’s a service that will meet the needs of many Indigenous people in Saint-Michel-des-Saints in southern Lanaudière. More than just a holistic health clinic, it is also a clinic for social intervention and education that will reach out to the community on their own turf. What’s more, it builds on the CAAL’s clinical services that it began offering members at the Centre in 2021.”

—Jennifer Brazeau, Executive Director, CAAL

“Friendship Centres are community organizations that implement concrete initiatives and measures to address the needs identified by urban Indigenous people and their specific challenges. The Indigenous population of the Lanaudière region will benefit enormously from the Mikinakw mobile clinic and its range of services. Once again, the CAAL and its team have demonstrated their exceptional ability to innovate and their inspiring leadership in response to their people.”

—Tanya Sirois, Executive Director, RCAAQ

## About the Centre d’amitié autochtone de Lanaudière

The mission of the Centre d’amitié autochtone de Lanaudière (CAAL) is to improve the quality of life of Indigenous people living in the region’s cities, towns and surrounding areas. The CAAL offers a range of services and activities tailored to the needs of the community, promoting the integration and well-being of its members.

## For more information:

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