

THE NORTHERN HEALING LODGE

FOR BODY AND SPIRIT



A CASE FOR SUPPORT

Please support our campaign to build, equip, and sustain a much-needed addictions treatment and recovery centre for people who live in the Swampy Cree Tribal Council Region of Manitoba.

Addiction is a chronic illness that often needs to be addressed through sustained, expert intervention at a treatment centre. For members of the eight Swampy Cree Tribal Council (SCTC) First Nations in northwest central Manitoba, there are no local facilities and gaining access to programs in other jurisdictions is difficult, and sometimes not possible at all.

The Swampy Cree Tribal Council is reaching out to the provincial and federal governments and to private donors to secure the funds required to build, equip, and sustain a leading-edge treatment centre that will offer customized, effective, compassionate, expert care to people looking to overcome their addictions.

Under the current scenario, people seeking treatment and the community health professionals who work with them face a variety of challenges:

Finding somewhere to “detox”: Before someone enters an addictions treatment program, they must undergo a period of supervised detoxification, a time when the body rids itself of the offending substance. The duration depends on the individual and the drugs involved. When a person says “I’m ready”, they need to get into detox right away before the compulsion to use drugs overwhelms them. Right now, SCTC can’t always find supervised detox in a timely way.

After detox: Ideally, someone finishing their detox should go directly into a treatment and recovery program. This does not happen under current circumstances. There could be a significant gap between detox and recovery—a period during which the person is especially vulnerable as they go through withdrawal. Drug use often resumes immediately; suicide is common. When it comes to addictions treatment, wait times can kill.

PROJECT DATA

- The Northern Healing Lodge will be a 30,000-square-foot facility with a capacity of 155.
- The project will cost \$20,000,000 to develop, with private donors contributing half of that amount.
- The Northern Healing Lodge will serve eight communities with a combined population of over 19,000.
- It is expected that the Northern Healing Lodge will generate 25–70 full- and part-time jobs, thereby contributing to the economic health of the region.



“When you have an addiction, your spirit is not well. Sweat lodges and sun dance ceremonies were important in my recovery from addiction when I was in my 20s. Our new centre will help people connect with their own spirit in their own way. The spirit has to heal to overcome addiction.”

**–Peter Constant,
Addictions
Advisor, National
Native Alcohol
and Drug Abuse
Program (NADAP)**



"This centre is long overdue. **Our communities are suffering.** We are seeing young people with great potential die. We are seeing adults living lives of despair and hopelessness, despite the resilience that lives within all of us. **I am tired of going to wakes.** I am tired of seeing the rich potential of our young people and our communities simply fade away. We need to start building the Northern Healing Lodge as soon as possible. We are grateful for your support."

**-Frank Turner,
Assistant Director, Cree
Nation Tribal Health
Centre Inc.**

Access: There are no treatment and recovery centres in the region. Health workers in the region typically scramble to obtain services for their clients in other parts of Manitoba and sometimes in Ontario. Those facilities understandably prioritize the needs of people in their own communities which means that the wait times for residents of the SCTC Region are usually very long. For some people, a long wait means a resumption of addictive behaviours. Some people die waiting.

Family participation: When a person goes to a facility far away, it is unlikely that their family can play a role in their treatment. Whenever possible, it is important to engage with the families of people trying to recover from addiction. While other members of the family might not have addictions themselves, they, too, are victims of this debilitating disease.

The nature of addiction is changing. The drugs people choose today are far more dangerous and far more addictive than ever before. Crystal methamphetamine. Opioids. Crack cocaine. Fentanyl. Recovery is difficult. Programs must become more sophisticated and creative to pursue and achieve sustainable results. To save lives. To restore communities. To build a positive, healthy future.

RESPONDING TO A CRISIS

- The prevalence of substance abuse among people aged 10 and older in Northern Manitoba is 9.4%, almost twice the provincial rate (data from 2008/2009 to 2012/2013).
- 119.1 per 100,000 people aged 10 and older from Northern Manitoba were treated in hospital for self-inflicted injuries in 2012/2013, higher than any other region in the province.
- .41 per 1,000 people aged 10 and older in Northern Manitoba died by suicide between 2007/2008 and 2011/2012, higher than any other region in Manitoba.

*Source: Manitoba Health,
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/annstats/as1213.pdf>*

"I DIDN'T WANT TO FACE MYSELF"

ZACC'S STORY



Five hundred kilometres. That's how far away from his family Zacc had to travel for the help he needed to overcome his addiction to opiates and cocaine. Five hundred kilometres from his wife and young children.

"I didn't have a choice," says Zacc of his decision to leave his home in The Pas for an eight-week treatment program in Nelson House. **"I needed to get healthy for my kids."**

Zacc's story is a success story. At 36, he is healthy, sober, and driven. He is a working mechanic, almost finished his formal training; a fully-engaged husband and father; and a deeply spiritual man. A man of profound wisdom and deep character.

"I pray a lot and we start our day with smudging," says Zacc. "It's uplifting."

Zacc believes that addictions and mental health challenges in First Nations communities have their roots in the legacy of trauma from residential schools and in the loss of tradition and identity that resulted.

He has reclaimed his own Indigenous identity along with the spiritual practices that help to define it. It is the absence of identity that drove Zacc into gangs and drug use as a teen, first in The Pas and later in Winnipeg.

"I didn't want to face myself," he says. "I didn't have a sense of who I was or a sense of purpose. I wasn't grounded."

His lifestyle led to crimes and jail time before he dug deep and decided that enough was enough. Once deciding that he was ready for a treatment program, there was no option close to home, and he had to wait almost five months to get into a program in Nelson House.

Through recovery, he sees the world with clearer eyes. He sees the rage and despair. He sees pockets of hopelessness—the feeling that led to his own nephew's suicide in 2018. But he also sees a determined passionate community eager to make change. And with a new treatment centre close to home, he sees hope.

"We are strong, resilient people," says Zacc.

A REGIONAL SOLUTION FOR MEMBERS OF SWAMPY CREE TRIBAL COUNCIL FIRST NATIONS

THE NORTHERN HEALING LODGE: A VISION OF EXCELLENCE AND WELL-BEING

The Northern Healing Lodge will deliver a comprehensive, short-term, residential addictions treatment program designed to achieve optimal, sustainable results for the people and families it serves. Features will include:

Detoxification: At the Northern Healing Lodge, there will be an onsite “detox” program, so clients can go seamlessly from detox to treatment and recovery in the same facility.

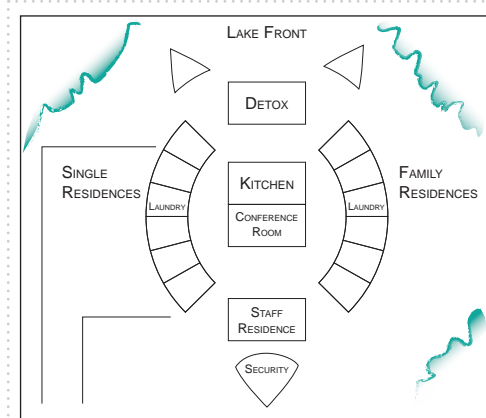
Family focus: The Northern Healing Lodge will engage a client’s family whenever it is possible and advantageous to the client. Having a supportive and informed family helps sustain recovery from addiction, thereby strengthening the whole family.

Traditional healing: For many Indigenous people battling addiction, re-connecting with traditional rituals and spiritual practices is a key way to support recovery. For those clients who seek this connection, the Northern Healing Lodge will offer smudging, land-based programs, and other traditional practices and study. Clients from other faith backgrounds and clients who do not seek a spiritual element in their recovery will be supported and helped in ways that are most meaningful to them.

Best practice in recovery; customized care: The Northern Healing Lodge will be committed to shaping its programs based on best practice as determined by the extensive research being done in addictions recovery. This is especially important as newer drugs are wreaking havoc on the lives of people who struggle with addiction. Our programs will be informed by traditional Indigenous knowledge, contemporary insights, and other influences. The Northern Healing Lodge will introduce clients to people who have recovered successfully, and will aim to empower clients to tap into their resilience and take charge of their lives.

After care: Maintaining sobriety is the most difficult challenge faced by people who have been through a treatment program. The Northern Healing Lodge will help clients transition back to their family and community, and develop strategies with community partners to sustain their success. The Northern Healing Lodge will also help clients cope with the mental health challenges connected to the addiction.

The Northern Healing Lodge is being designed as a 30,000-square-foot facility with a capacity of 155. The space will include a detox facility, family rooms, individual rooms, daycare, and state-of-the-art common spaces and program areas to enhance the client experience and create the conditions for healing to happen. The centre will also provide convenient access to natural spaces for land-based healing initiatives to enrich the spirit.



A current partial floor plan: the Northern Healing Lodge will feature comfortable common areas and family spaces in which clients can heal and thrive. (Floor plan subject to change.)

THE SETTING

EMBRACING THE POWER OF LAND-BASED HEALING

The Northern Healing Lodge will be a place of reflection and well-being. A place to heal, a place to recover, a place to reconnect with one's identity. The facility will be located on 10 acres of land near the former Guy Hill Residential School, 20 kms away from The Pas and three kms away from an airport. The natural, forested setting will allow program participants to embrace the healing powers of nature as they reconnect with traditional ways.

Traditional land-based methods have been gaining prominence in contemporary health care as useful therapeutic options for people struggling with mental health issues and addictions:

“And so when I think of where we are at in recognizing the harms caused by colonization—the extent of trauma, mental health, substance misuse and addiction issues—and the need for evidence and evidence-based practices, it should be well acknowledged that land-based healing programs ought to be supported through appropriate funding and an integral part of our health care system. Land-based healing is an investment that will no doubt result in better health outcomes and increased wellness within Indigenous communities.”¹



¹ Dr. Renee Linklater, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health,
<https://www.camh.ca/en/camh-news-and-stories/land-based-healing-in-first-nations-communities>

Emma knew that it was time to seek help for her addiction to pain medication when her daughter wouldn't let her hold her own grandchild.

"My daughter said, 'you know what, Mom, I'm scared for you to hold my baby because you're nodding off,'" says Emma, 48. "I couldn't focus. I was always falling asleep. My daughter was afraid."

Emma's addiction story started with a stumble in a puddle in Winnipeg and a broken leg. A complex surgery eventually repaired the damage and rods were inserted to stabilize her leg. The pain she felt from the break was unbearable, and so she sought medical help.

Emma was prescribed pain-killing medication—seemingly too much. She became addicted quickly and soon started finding additional pills to retain a constant high.

"I couldn't relax unless there were 50 Tylenol-3s in my purse," says Emma, a mother of four.

When she finally gathered the strength and energy to seek help, her only option at the time was to travel to Winnipeg. She needed to take methadone under the supervision of a pharmacist and could not afford the trips back and forth to the north.

"I didn't have a place to live in Winnipeg, so I slept in bus shacks, churches, and warehouses," says Emma, an aspiring chef. **"I was homeless for months, but I needed to get well for my family."**

Emma is still working on her recovery; her resolve is unwavering. She is motivated by her love of her children and grandchildren; inspired by her Christian faith; and driven by her passion to heal and get on with life.

She is happy to hear that a regional treatment centre is in the works. For Emma, healing is everything.

"I SLEPT IN BUS SHACKS"

EMMA'S STORY



SPONSORING ORGANIZATION

CREE NATION TRIBAL HEALTH CENTRE INC.

Cree Nation Tribal Health Inc. is committed to providing dedicated leadership in the enhancement of self-government in First Nation health care by:

- advising, educating, and promoting each member First Nation on local control of health care services by using a holistic approach;
- acknowledging traditional culture and values;
- integrating the knowledge and skills of First Nation members; and
- coordinating and assisting the efforts of member First Nations to provide quality services.



The mandate of the Northern Healing Lodge and Cree Nation Tribal Health Centre will be to bring together the best of First Nations' healing and mentoring through traditional wisdom and western practices, medicinal, and psychotherapeutic treatments; and to provide holistic and traditional care for all First Nations' peoples and families, especially to those distressed by substance misuse concerns in Northern Manitoba.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To sharply reduce the numbers of deaths and hospitalizations caused by alcohol and drug abuse in our communities and give our people the tools they need to lift themselves out of despair, build meaningful lives, and make a positive contribution to their communities.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

We hold resolutions in support of this important initiative from the Swampy Cree Tribal Council (SCTC) and from the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) which represent eight & 26 First Nations in Northern Manitoba within Treaties 4, 5, 6, and 10.

MANITOBA KEEWATINOWI OKIMAKANAK INC. (MKO)

Incorporated in 1981 as the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, MKO is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that provides a collective voice on issues of inherent, Treaty, Aboriginal, and human rights for the citizens of the 26 sovereign First Nations we represent. The MKO First Nations are signatories to Treaties 4, 5, 6, and 10.



mkonation.com

SWAMPY CREE TRIBAL COUNCIL

Swampy Cree Tribal Council (SCTC) comprises eight First Nations in northwest central Manitoba with a combined membership of more than 19,000. The Council's head office is located in The Pas, Manitoba.

Member nations are: Chemawawin Cree Nation, Mosakahiken Cree Nation, Marcel Colomb First Nation, Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, Misipawastik Cree Nation, Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Sapotaweyak Cree Nation, and Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation. SCTC's mission is to pursue the social, economic, and political well-being and development of member First Nations.



swampycree.com