



**Lake of the Woods
District Hospital**

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grant awarded to address racism and discrimination in healthcare

February 2, 2023, Kenora, ON – Ogimaawabiitong - Kenora Chiefs Advisory (KCA) has received a grant over the next two years through Indigenous Services Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch – Ontario Region under the Anti-Indigenous Racism Cultural Safety Partnership Fund stream.

This initiative is focused on getting a better, and deeper understanding of Anishinaabe history and culture, learning about traditional perspectives and distinct challenges experienced by the First Nations in our area.

Funds will be specifically used to develop Anishinaabe Cultural Competency and Culturally Safe Care training programs, which would be delivered to all Lake of the Woods District Hospital (LWDH) and KCA employees. Cultural training and learning opportunities will happen as part of new hire orientation process and on an ongoing basis throughout an employee's career to support the progressive development of cultural competency. Additionally, the hope is to eventually expand this work out to other organizations within the health care sector.

Indigenous communities and peoples have long advocated for better health care that encompasses traditional approaches and culturally centered care, and by taking the lead and creating better opportunities for cultural competency and safety training, it allows us to work towards the overall goal of health transformation and creating equity in these spaces. Indigenous communities have unique healthcare needs that need to be acknowledged, and we cannot move forward with the way the current system is and expect positive impactful change.

Work like this will be accomplished with the guidance and knowledge from both elders and knowledge keepers within the community. By starting these conversations and planning at a grassroots community level, it allows for true Anishinaabe led care that is developed for and by Anishinaabe peoples.

KCA and the LWDH have a deep on-going partnership on existing projects such as the client navigators, the All Nations Health Partners, the All Nations Hospital project and this new funding will allow us to continue the expansion and development of that partnership side by side.

This funding is especially timely as we work to co-develop a new hospital. These types of training programs must be embedded into the framework and system, if we want to achieve the goal of improving health outcomes for all people in the region it serves.

The new hospital will be the first large development in the Kenora and Treaty 3 area that sees true partnership and planning with our surrounding First Nations communities and the municipality.

Ray Racette, President & CEO of Lake of the Woods District Hospital shares “We are extremely excited to work together with Kenora Chiefs Advisory on this essential project. Attention to key elements of cultural safety and humility are fundamental to creating a healthy care relationship. Significant cultural training for all our hospital and professional staff will mean bridging gaps in cultural patient care and ultimately an enhanced patient experience.”

Chief Lorraine Cobiness, Board President for Ogimaawabiitong on behalf of the Board of Directors says “This is the type of change and work that we need to see happening in systems everywhere. We are very excited that we are able to work in a true side by side partnership with the hospital, and really begin incorporating this type of training on a larger scale. In order to strengthen and repair current and future relationships, our partners need to do the ground level work of understanding Anishinaabe peoples and culture. Doing this with the guidance and knowledge from our elders, our healers and our teachers is going to be so crucial if we want to ensure real meaningful change is happening for Anishinaabe peoples everywhere, that is more importantly Anishinaabe led.”

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