



Indigenous Health Centre of Tiohtià:ke

2020-22 Special Annual Report

Message from the Acting Chair

It is with great pleasure that we present this annual report to the urban Indigenous community and membership of the Indigenous Health Centre of Tiohtià:ke (IHCT). I acknowledge on behalf of myself and the Board of Directors our inability to host regular Annual General Meetings for the past 2 years (March 2019), a time of a world pandemic. We did our best at that time and sent out information to our membership which was a legal option.

The first quarter of 2023 brings us to a great place. We have news to share at our Special Annual General Meeting. IHCT is finally becoming operational. We have hired an Executive Director and have begun the operational work, and welcome the new employees recently hired. We are actively seeking a location for an urgent care clinic space in advanced negotiations. Michelle Reis-Amores is the new Executive Director, who has been an executive of six different agencies, in two different provinces and has worked within government at Indigenous Services Canada. While Michelle is not Indigenous, she has strong connections with the Indigenous community, including having a former long-term partner who is Indigenous who Michelle worked alongside in Indigenous urban community and Michelle maintains many personal connections from over twenty years of community work. We warmly welcome her to help establish a strong set of operations.

In closing, we hope you join us in working together to create a stronger vision for how IHCT can best serve the urban Indigenous community of Montreal.

Carrie Martin, Acting Chair/President

The Work We Do

In the recent past, without having staff in place, many of the networks, partnerships, and meetings IHCT is part of have been attended by members of the Board. We also have a garden that has been maintained over many years and provides food and traditional medicines to the Indigenous community.

These efforts have kept us connected and informed of important issues the urban Indigenous community are experiencing. We've attended the network meetings MIHAC and the Local Access Table meetings, and met with Ministerial partners and the City of Montreal amongst others.

In late **2020**, we secured some small funds through the 2 Spirits in Motion Society to address the needs of the Indigenous members of the LBTT2sQQ community. J Kevin Barlow, a consultant has been part of supporting IHCT, both with the 2 Spirit funding, as well as writing other proposals which were successfully funded. Funding, although specific to the 2 Spirit population, addressed COVID-19 issues.

In **2021**, networking and collaborations continued with the Board attending various meetings and developing partnerships with private donors and foundations: Pathy Family Foundation, the Trottier Family Foundation, Fondation de Grand Montreal, Centre Aide, McConnell Foundation, Hogg Family Foundation, Peacock Foundation, Marcelle and Jean Coutu Foundation, Echo Foundation, J.A. De Sève Foundation. We continued our partnership with Queen Elizabeth Health Complex as well as CIUSSS du Centre-Ouest-de-l'île-de-Montréal amidst a pandemic.

In January **2022**, J Kevin Barlow was engaged to write more proposals, in this case an Urgent Care Clinic call for proposals, as well as a health navigator call for proposals, both from the same department of the government of Quebec. Both were funded and resulted in a collaboration with the CIUSSS du Centre-Ouest-de-l'île-de-Montréal, Centre de Réadaptation Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre, as well as Queen Elizabeth Health Complex. Dr. Sean Yaphe, one of the IHCT founding members and Board member, played an extremely important role in keeping the urgent care clinic discussions moving forward.

Because IHCT still had no management in place, the hiring of two Health Navigators was delayed. The recognition that community-based agencies during the time of the pandemic required more time to develop opportunities for service delivery is a reality for all of us. We work with our funders on understanding the balance between a delay of the start-up and the requirement to move forward, and the hiring of an Executive Director. Our board worked to keep the search for the leader an integral part of the urgent care clinic discussions moving forward.

In the fall of **2022**, IHCT Board made an effort to contract an Acting Executive Director, however this did not happen. It was then decided to secure a company to manage the executive search. Elevate Search Group was able to find and present quality candidates, which resulted in Michelle Reis-Amores being hired. This period took place between October and December 2022 with an official start date for Michelle after the holidays (January **2023**).

Message from the Executive Director

I am humbled and excited to be in the Tiohtià:ke:ke area with the honourable task of developing the structures required to fully operationalize what started out as an idea. The word 'desire' comes from 'to sire', 'to impregnate'. In French désir also has the root of 'sir' which connotes 'grandfather'. And, from those two colonial languages, I bring up one human connector, which is to collectively desire, and to know that as a group the founders wanted to create. The people

who brought into being IHCT had the initial desire and impetus to come together and create greater access to health services. This path had been years in the making, with a world pandemic slowing the work done. But, with attention and dedication, and allowing the seed of ingenuity to go into the dark ground of potentiality, the founding members birthed what is now the health focused start-up, IHCT.

My time at IHCT is very recent and I am committed to the next steps. Since the time of my joining the leadership of IHCT key areas of focus myself have included: creating a consolidated annual budget covering 3 fiscal years, securing space to operate IHCT, hiring staff, developing office policies and procedures, writing grants, developing partnerships, purchasing equipment, as well as planning the Special Annual Meeting. I welcome my staff team and all the members to our Special Annual Meeting.

In closing, I am honoured and hopeful of our upcoming conversations, as we step into a time of serving our communities.

Michelle Reis-Amores, Executive Director