



## **Movember to Fund First Subarctic Indigenous Mental Health Addictions Centre in Canada**

*Movember commits to three years and over \$1 million of funding for the Northern-based Churchill Wellness Centre, opening Fall 2020*

**Winnipeg, Canada | Thursday, June 18, 2019** – Movember will be providing funding for Canada's first subarctic mental health addictions centre, providing integral support for local residents in the North. As part of the charity's focus on programming in the region, Movember will commit to three years of funding the Churchill Wellness Centre, totalling over \$1 million CAD and providing much-needed mental health and social inclusion support for residents living in Churchill and surrounding areas.

The Churchill-based Wellness Centre will be the newest addition to Movember's Indigenous programming stream, continuing the charity's commitment to broadening mental health awareness and social inclusion programming for Canada's Indigenous populations. Movember has been actively involved in providing programs targeted to Canada's Indigenous communities for over five years, with active programs now operational in Winnipeg, Manitoba and Arviat, Nunavut.

The decision to base the new Centre and develop programming in Churchill, Manitoba was an easy one, says Sonia Prevost-Derbecker, Director of Global Indigenous Programs for Movember "Oftentimes, people who require addictions and mental health support in the Churchill community and surrounding regions are sent to Winnipeg or Ottawa, far from the support of their own family and the broader community," she says. "Sadly, many people arrive in these locations as strangers with limited local connections and emotional support. It is clearly time for a different model - one that is led for and by Indigenous people and operates in the North."

It is well documented that Indigenous people across Canada suffer from poorer health determinant outcomes than non-Indigenous peoples. At a recent community consultation led by Churchill Health Centre's Subarctic Friendship it was identified that young men across the region seem to experience that disparity even more strongly than other members of the community. Young men in Manitoba's North are more at risk of adverse impacts insufficient access to health services, healthy food, or mental health services or to experience poverty and unemployment

The Churchill Wellness Centre will aim to provide the mental health supports to support young men within the subarctic region. It will include a number of different programming streams, all aimed at helping the local community to develop stronger social connections and support positive mental health awareness. The centre will strive to apply an Indigenous lens to reestablish a connection to the land's culture and to the historic identity of participants.

Planned programming currently includes the establishment of a local **Land-based Program**, which seeks to preserve cultural traditions and introduce traditional teachings and activities to a new generation of men in the community. A local **Men's Group Program** from Movember will also be established, which focuses on the benefits of male-focused group-based activities such as traditional arts or beadwork as a means to developing stronger social connections. Social connectivity has shown to play a pivotal role in positive mental health outcomes in men and continues to be the basis of many Movember programs, Indigenous-focused and beyond.



The Centre will also be connected to the regional hospital, the Churchill Health Centre and as such will benefit from referral needs such as emergency beds for those needing detox and access to formal treatment supports.

The programs will be connected and facilitated through the Subarctic Friendship Circle and The Knowledge Keepers, a local community group that is comprised of community members who represent Inuit and First Nations, as well as the town of Churchill. These groups will work to ensure the Centre's programs are inclusive and representative of the many Indigenous nations that call Churchill home.

"These are exciting times," says Churchill Mayor, Mike Spence. "The development of this centre offers our community the opportunity to provide mental health support to Indigenous people where they live in a way that is respectful of their heritage and their culture while, at the same time, allowing them to remain closer, to their natural support networks."

The Churchill Wellness Centre will be located in close proximity to the Churchill Health Centre, a substantial 220,000 square foot civic building that currently holds a hospital, day care, skating and curling rinks, among much more.

"When we heard of the opportunity to develop a mental health program alongside Movember, we were excited to make that a reality," says Jason Klainchar, Chief Operating Officer for the Churchill Health Centre. "This is the time and the place for that vision and model to become a reality."

Movember, the Churchill Health Centre and the Subarctic Friendship Circle hope to work together to have The Churchill Wellness Centre fully operational this coming fall 2020.

You can learn more about Movember and Movember's Indigenous programming streams at [Movember.com](http://Movember.com).

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**About Movember:**

Movember is the leading charity changing the face of men's health on a global scale, focusing on mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer. The charity raises funds to deliver innovative, breakthrough research and support programmes that enable men to live happier, healthier and longer lives. Committed to disrupting the status quo, millions have joined the movement, helping fund over 1,250 projects around the world. In addition to tackling key health issues faced by men, Movember is working to encourage men to stay healthy in all areas of their life, with a focus on men staying socially connected and becoming more open to discussing their health and significant moments in their lives. The charity's vision is to have an everlasting impact on the face of men's health. To donate or learn more, please visit [Movember.com](http://Movember.com).

**Note to Editors:**

Movember strongly encourages the inclusion of appropriate help-seeking information for stories about suicide and mental illness. For crisis support at any time, day or night, we encourage Canadians to reach out to one of the following services: Suicide Prevention Service (Toll Free: 1-833-456-4566 - ENG, 1-866-277-3553 – FR) or the Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868). For more help-seeking information, visit [Movember.com/findhelp](http://Movember.com/findhelp).