

Ceremony opens Temagami healing space

Darlene Wroe

Oct 16, 2024 8:00 AM

Updated Oct 16, 2024 4:35 PM



A new gazebo healing centre was officially opened at the Temagami Medical Clinic September 20. Pictured here standing from the left are Temagami Medical Clinic and Family Health Team executive director Ellen Ibey, Temagami Councillor Joanne Platts, Timiskaming-Cochrane MPP John Vanthof, Nipissing-Timiskaming MP Anthony Rota, Temagami First Nation cultural teacher Boshk Aguonia, Timiskaming Area Ontario Health Team transition lead Kerry Schubert-Mackey, and Temagami Family Health Team social worker Dani Ducharme. Seated are Teme-Augama Anishnabai Chief Michael Paul, and Temagami Medical Clinic and Family Health Team board member Ruth McKeown. | Darlene Wroe, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

[Listen to this article](#)

00:03:28

Temagami Family Health Team recently held the official opening of its healing, reflection and smudging space.

The gazebo has been created to provide a comforting area where Indigenous people and others can find calm while they attend the medical clinic, it was explained during the ceremony.

Within the space the First Nations' medicine wheel is represented along with comfortable seating and a smudging bowl. The space is also surrounded by a natural outdoor setting.

Temagami Family Health Team social worker Dani Ducharme explained that funding for the construction of the healing space has been provided through the Ontario Ministry of Health.

"It was suggested that an outdoor space to provide healing, reflection and smudging be developed for the region of Temagami."

He noted the leadership of Temagami Family Health Team executive director Ellen Ibey.

"This new space will now promote a healthy healing environment and strong connection to the land," said Ducharme.

"Clients will be able to receive this service in this private space where reflection will lead to healing the mind, body and soul."

Temagami Medical Centre and Family Health Team board member Ruth McKeown stated "Many people have been involved in the development of the idea of creating this land-based healing space for the people of the Temagami area."

Temagami First Nation cultural coordinator Tyler Paul and cultural teacher Boshk Aguonia were thanked by Ducharme for their guidance through the development of the project.

A blessing was provided by elder June Twain at the official ceremony on September 20.

Boshk offered smudging to those in attendance while Twain explained that smudging removes negative energy.

Nipissing-Timiskaming MP Anthony Rota stated that the erection of the gazebo is "one step in the right direction, and it's about respecting culture."

Timiskaming-Cochrane MPP John Vanthof said the project helps to "show the rest of the province, and the rest of the country, how to work together and improve all our lives."

Teme-Augama Anishnabai Chief Michael Paul commented, "We have a great facility here. I can see this calming everybody right down. This is a great home setting and it's very spiritual."

Timiskaming Area Ontario Health Team transformation lead Kerry Schubert-Mackey stated that health and social care partners across Temiskaming are "coming together to find a way to bring patient family caregiver voice to the decision-making table to be part of those decisions to build the system to provide the right care at the right time and the right place."

The objective is to provide "a local health system that's easy to navigate and that provides a local health care system where transitions from care provider to care provider are seamless and that everyone has equal opportunity to be healthy and live well," she continued

In addition, the goal is "also to make sure that we are giving voice to First Nation and Indigenous people to ensure Indigenous health is in Indigenous hands."

Temagami Councillor Joanne Platts, representing Temagami council, commended those who worked on the project and noted "all the years of work that go on behind the scene to get the funding, to do the planning and to make sure the values and mission are aligned."

Darlene Wroe is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter with the Temiskaming Speaker. LJI is funded by the Government of Canada.

[Add to the story](#)

[Have a story idea?](#)

[Letter to the editor](#)

[Report a mistake](#)

[Ask a question](#)