Vancouver Aboriginal
Health Society

Put Your Commitment to Reconciliation into Action

Support the new VAHS Healing Centre

Land-based healing in the Downtown Eastside that supports a connected, empowered, and thriving community

Health and Wellness Services Grounded In Land-based Healing

Imagine a space for land-based healing in Vancouver that supports a connected, empowered, and thriving urban Indigenous community.

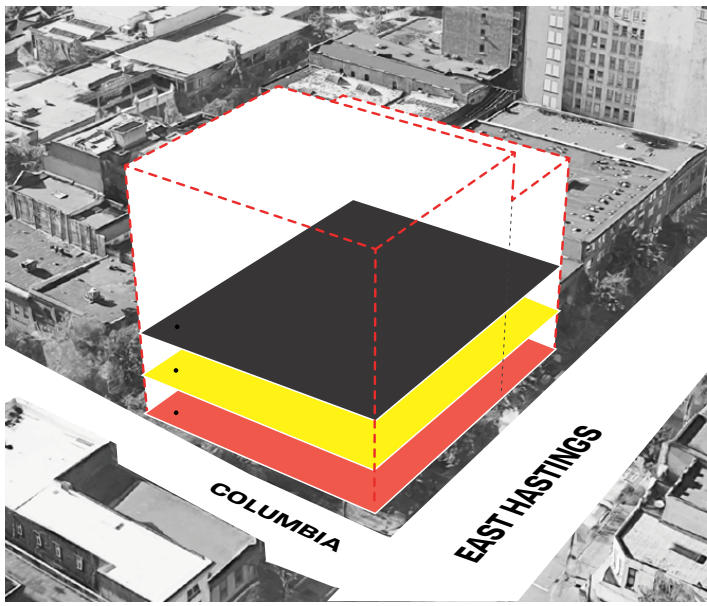
Rooted in tradition, ceremony and ancestral knowledge, land-based healing creates community, fosters a sense of belonging, and connects us to something bigger. It's also what makes Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society (VAHS)—a leader in Indigenous health service for more than 30 years—different.

From Pipe Ceremonies held on the back porch of our clinic, to sweat lodges in the East Hastings community garden, and our daily cultural workshops on-site, VAHS consistently exercises its commitment to land-based healing. These critical health offerings are about to expand, thanks to the Housing and Healing Centre project at 52-92 East Hastings Street—a collaboration of the Aboriginal Land Trust, VAHS, Lu'ma Native Housing Society, and RainCity Housing. The building, which will provide 111 housing units, will also give VAHS a new purpose-built space.

Opening in Fall 2023, the new VAHS Healing Centre will provide ongoing land-based healing opportunitives as well as culturally safe primary care, dental care, counselling, and social supports to urban Indigenous people in Vancouver. The new facility will bring our primary care, dental, and cultural programs under one roof for the first time, allowing for greater collaboration and further integration of land-based healing into our services.

The VAHS Healing Centre will honour and celebrate the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səl̓ilwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations—the people who first called this land home. The area now known as the Downtown Eastside is called Lek'Leki ("beautiful grove"), a crossroads for surrounding Sḵwx̱wú7mesh villages to meet, and a source of diverse foods and medicines.

The new ceremonial and garden spaces in the VAHS Healing Centre are an opportunity to connect people to the rich history of these lands. This new facility is an important step towards reconciliation.



LEVEL 1
Education and Meeting Spaces
Gathering Spaces
Welcome Hall
1,506 sq. ft.

LEVEL 2
Medical Clinic
Dental Clinic
Pharmacy
Community Learning
12,445 sq. ft.

LEVEL 3
Healing Spaces
Elders' Spaces
Counselling
Healing Centre Garden
3,092 sq. ft.

What the VAHS Healing Centre will Offer

The VAHS Healing Centre will be an accessible, one-stop location for medical, dental, mental health, and social services. These key services will be enhanced by the Centre's cultural programming and the VAHS Circle of Care model that braids Indigenous knowledge and land-based healing into urban healthcare.

The new, purpose-built, three-storey VAHS Healing Centre will promote low-barrier opportunities for land-based healing for urban Indigenous people. An outdoor Healing Garden on the third floor will offer accessible and permanent ceremony space in the heart of the Downtown Eastside, including a sweat lodge, a water feature for water ceremonies, a teepee for healing circles, and a medicinal plant garden.

A traditional medicine pharmacy, connected to the Primary Care and Dental Clinics, will offer medicinal plants, salves, teas, and other plant extracts, providing access to medicines not readily available in the city. Elders and Knowledge Keepers will have spaces for workshops, ceremonies, counselling, and cultural sharing.

The first of its kind in Western Canada, this innovative facility will be a place of healing and growth grounded in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis ancestral knowledge.

Healing Centre Services at a Glance

Designed to welcome everyone with dignity, respect, honour, and love, the VAHS Healing Centre will offer a variety of services, including:

- A **Primary Care Clinic** that demonstrates respect and value for patients and is responsive to the unique needs of urban Indigenous people
- A full-service **Dental Clinic** with by-donation options for those without dental coverage, and a training facility that partners with local college/university Dental programs to promote culturally safe dental care
- An in-house **pharmacy** for traditional and Western medicines
- A **welcoming physical layout** that promotes holistic healing for all, including outdoor elements such as medicinal plants, a sweat lodge, a teepee, and a water feature
- **Mental and emotional support services** that help people feel accepted, safe, cared for, equal, and empowered
- **Trauma-informed counselling** for families and individuals
- **Cultural sharing and traditional healing**

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Share in the Success

Ground has been broken and construction has started at 52-92 East Hastings. VAHS is seeking corporations, foundations, and individuals to support the capital costs of building the new Healing Centre. As of September 2022, costs for the VAHS Healing Centre are estimated at $20 million.

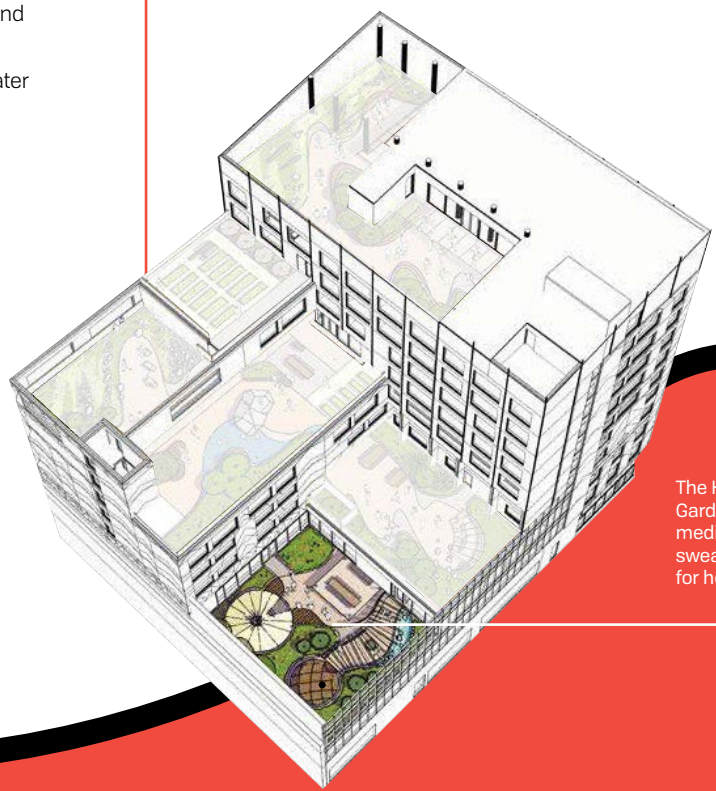
By promoting land-based healing, VAHS puts the Medicine Wheel into action, addressing all aspects of our health and wellness: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. It's culturally safe healthcare that honours the whole person. More land-based healing will mean greater success for people who rely on our services. You can share in this success.

Whether you represent a corporation, foundation, or are an individual, you can put reconciliation into action and contribute to the success of this cutting-edge health initiative. As a capital funder, you or your organization will be joining a robust, diverse, and experienced team committed to caring for urban Indigenous people and the Downtown Eastside community.

Donations from $1 to $9,999 can be made through our website at vahs.life. For larger donations, please email rosemary.ed@vahs.life

"The Healing Centre is a place of traditional knowledge that is put into practice alongside of Western medicine."

– Chief Bill Williams
Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Hereditary Chief



The Healing Centre Garden will feature medicinal plants and a sweat lodge and teepee for healing circles

Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society

To learn more about VAHS and our programs, please visit us online at **vahs.life**

Ready to contribute to the VAHS Healing Centre?

Want to learn more? Give us a call today.

Contact Rosemary Stager-Wallace, Executive Director, at 604-254-9949 ext. 223 or rosemary.ed@vahs.life