



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dr. Christopher Mushquash honoured with prestigious Canada Gairdner Momentum Award

(Thunder Bay, ON – March 30, 2023) The [2023 Canada Gairdner Award recipients](#) have been announced, and local clinical psychologist Dr. Christopher Mushquash is being honoured for his work in Indigenous-led mental health and substance use research.

Dr. Mushquash is Vice President of Research at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC), Chief Scientist at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute (TBRHRI), a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Mental Health and Addiction, Professor at Lakehead University and NOSM University, and psychologist at Dilico Anishinabek Family Care.

In his work, Dr. Mushquash investigates Indigenous mental health, substance use, trauma, and general mental wellness. He partners with communities, government and academia and uses evidence-based approaches in alignment with First Nations values to ensure his research and its outcomes are culturally — and contextually — appropriate for people in First Nations, rural and northern communities.

“The goals of the research are rooted in the medicine wheel, in the four interconnected directions,” explained Dr. Mushquash. “We want to identify culturally — and contextually — appropriate targets of intervention, develop methods to measure outcomes; develop and test interventions that incorporate culture-based knowledge with scientific methods; and share the knowledge among Indigenous and academic communities, clinicians, and policymakers.”

Established in 1957, the Gairdner Foundation’s annual awards recognize and celebrate researchers from around the world for their excellence in fundamental research that impacts human health. Over the years, 402 awards have been presented to people from more than 40 countries and of those awardees, 96 have gone on to receive Nobel Prizes. Dr. Mushquash is a recipient of the 2023 Canada Gairdner Momentum Award.

“It is truly an honour to receive this award,” said Dr. Mushquash. “The work we are doing, the partnerships being built, will improve mental health systems and services for Indigenous Peoples. We are building a framework to better serve Indigenous communities.”

“Congratulations to Dr. Mushquash for being recognized for his exemplary and ground breaking work,” said Dr. Rhonda Crocker Ellacott, President and CEO of TBRHSC and CEO of TBRHRI. “His research and advocacy demonstrates the power of responsive mental health and addiction services. His research is affecting real change for people and making significant and lasting improvements in care and outcomes, while informing best practices across the country.”

“The Gairdner Momentum Award recognizes exceptional early- to mid-career researchers whose research is having significant impact in the health field now and in the future,” said Dr. Andrew P. Dean, Lakehead University’s Vice President, Research and Innovation. “There is no doubt that the research being done by Dr. Mushquash clearly fits this criteria. His work is vital to understanding the effectiveness of treatments for mental health and addictions for people in Northwestern Ontario. In particular, his research will improve the health outcomes and services for Indigenous populations in our region.”



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“Dilico Anishinabek Family Care is thrilled to see Dr. Christopher Mushquash receive this honourable award for his dedication and excellence in indigenous and community based research. He is truly an Indigenous mental health and addictions research champion. We are grateful for the commitment Dr. Mushquash has for indigenous led and culturally centered research initiatives; his work is leading the way for improved mental wellness outcomes for Indigenous people.” said Darcia Borg, Executive Director.

You can find out more about Dr. Mushquash’s work at <https://www.christophermushquash.com/>.

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TBRHSC: Exceptional care for every patient, every time.

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC), a 375-bed academic specialized acute care facility, is a national leader in Patient and Family Centred Care. As the only tertiary care provider in Northwestern Ontario, we provide comprehensive services to a population of over 250,000 residents in a region the size of France. Effectively addressing the health care needs of patients and families has earned us both Innovation Awards and Leading Practice Designations. As an academic health sciences centre, we teach the next generation of health care providers and advance medical research. Patients benefit from interprofessional teams of dedicated health care providers and access to leading-edge medical technology and clinical trials. To fulfill its teaching and research strategic goals, TBRHSC is supported by Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute (TBRHRI) as a not-for-profit and independent research corporation. TBRHRI is the research arm of TBRHSC and seeks to lead research to improve the health outcome of the people of Northwestern Ontario and beyond.



Lakehead University

Lakehead University is a fully comprehensive university with approximately 9,700 full-time equivalent students and over 2,000 faculty and staff at two campuses in Orillia and Thunder Bay, Ontario. Lakehead has nine faculties, including Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Graduate Studies, Health & Behavioural Sciences, Law, Natural Resources Management, Science & Environmental Studies, and Social Sciences & Humanities. Lakehead University's achievements have been recognized nationally and internationally, including being ranked in the top half of Times Higher Education's 2023 World Universities Rankings for the fourth consecutive year, and the number one university in the world with fewer than 10,000 students in THE's 2022 Impact Rankings (which assesses institutions against the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals). Visit www.lakeheadu.ca.

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care (Dilico) is a First Nation governed organization with an integrated continuum of service comprised of the following services which are all made available in different capacities that include Health, Mental Health and Addictions, and Child Welfare. Dilico's Mikinaak Customary Care Service Model, services are culturally based with First Nations communities, families and extended families involved in ensuring a child's safety and well-being. At the core of the Mikinaak Service Model, it is the belief that it takes a "community" to raise a child. www.dilico.com