



MEDIA RELEASE from the UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 20, 2014

### **U OF T TO LAUNCH NEW INSTITUTE TO FOCUS ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH**

TORONTO, ON – The University of Toronto announced today that Michael and Amira Dan have donated \$10 million to support the creation of an institute dedicated to improving the health of Indigenous peoples. The donation is being announced today in recognition and celebration of National Aboriginal Day on June 21.

The institute will be based at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, a Faculty of the University of Toronto, and will involve faculty experts throughout the university. An advisory committee dedicated to community-based collaboration will be assembled to ensure key voices from Indigenous communities are involved in the institute's mission.

"I am excited and honoured to take part in an initiative that will improve the health and well-being of one of Canada's most marginalized peoples," said Dan. "The institute will be based at Canada's leading university and will provide innovative solutions designed to narrow the much too large gap between the health status of Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations."

The development of an Indigenous health institute demonstrates the university's commitment to improving the well-being and quality of life enjoyed by Indigenous peoples through higher education and advanced research. Research and innovative approaches will be shared with global partners addressing similar problems.

"The actual creation of an institute that merges traditional and contemporary experience in health is a truly exciting development for Indigenous peoples the world over," said Elder Fred Kelly, a member of the Ojibways of Onigaming and a citizen of the Anishinaabe Nation. "It is noble in vision and bold in mission. Its spirit of innovativeness is a dream coming true."

U of T has a long tradition of graduate education and research in Indigenous health issues and will be hosting Canada's first [Indigenous Health Conference](#) later this year. The objectives of the inaugural conference are to share knowledge and build capacity among healthcare providers who serve Indigenous peoples in Canada.

“The U of T community encompasses the breadth and depth of expertise required to engage in this complex endeavour – leading scholars in public health, medicine, nursing, social work, education, law, anthropology, and many other disciplines,” said U of T President Meric Gertler. “This institute will provide unique opportunities for world-class inter-disciplinary graduate and post-graduate education and research programs in a field of great importance to Indigenous peoples and to society as a whole.”

Howard Hu, Dean of the University’s Dalla Lana School of Public Health, also expressed his excitement about the new project and said the institute will play an important role at U of T and throughout the country.

“U of T is already a leader in Indigenous health research through various programs and courses in different faculties, schools and departments,” said Hu. “The creation of this institute will bring together these separate efforts, create new partnerships with Indigenous communities, and markedly strengthen U of T’s ability to generate the community-based research and new scholars critical to improving Indigenous health in Canada and around the world.”

Dean Hu noted that over the next few months a governance structure will be developed to ensure a commitment to collaboration and participatory practices with respect to the institute’s teaching, research and knowledge-translation activities, to ensure benefits for Indigenous peoples in Canada and globally.

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