

## Suquamish Tribe set to open new 'Healing House' health clinic

Suquamish Tribe completed primary construction of its new health clinic Nov. 3 with the installation of six prefabricated modules that will create the 4,116-square-foot facility. The new clinic, will be called Healing House, h ə l i ʔ i l a l ʔ t x ʷ, and is expected to open its doors to clients in early 2022.

As crews shift to finishing the interior spaces and installing new medical equipment, the clinic's new director says staffing up the clinic is now the top priority.

"Building a new facility is no small matter, but the real challenge will be finding the right mix of top-notch health care providers who will turn this building into one of the best health clinics in the area," says Stephen Kutz, who was hired by the tribe in August to help stand up the clinic.

Indeed, hiring physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, medical assistants, receptionists, billers and coders won't be easy at a time when health care professionals are in high demand. But serving at the Tribe's new clinic will be a rare opportunity for the right providers.

"This is a chance to be part of a clinic from the beginning, to help it form. It will be a place where you can grow as the clinic grows," says Kutz. "And health care providers can expect something that isn't always available – time to get to know their clients."

Kutz joins the Suquamish Tribe as Health Director after directing the Health and Human Services Department of his own Tribe, the Cowlitz Tribe. Before that he was the director of the Mason County Health Department. All that came after serving for 20 years as a nurse in the U.S. Army, retiring as a Lt. Colonel.

Healing House clinic will serve Suquamish Tribal members as its first priority, but the facility will also be eventually open to other members of the community, says Kutz.

The clinic's approach to care will build on the hospitality and traditions the Suquamish people are known for. Family medicine, with a focus on prevention, nutrition, plus an atmosphere infused with tradition and culture will offer healthcare designed for physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

"We'll be treating the family, from Elders to newborns, honoring the people where they are," he says. "That means allowing Indian people to receive the health care they deserve."

Providing prevention and treatment for the whole community will be a core focus, Kutz says. That means enhancing the things that make people feel well and healthy, and contribute to resilience – things that build on the community's strengths like the annual intertribal Canoe Journey and other cultural gatherings, as well as traditional foods and medicines.

There will be time for health care providers to get to know their patients and to fully understand their medical conditions. Each patient will be known to health care providers as a member of a family and community.

"We care about the community that we are serving," Kutz says. "We're going to hire people who see this as more than just a job -- people who care about the people they are taking care of."

Preventative care will be central, with dietician services, and a focus on prevention of diabetes and other chronic diseases, especially those that are most commonplace among Native people. In addition to clinic staff, the Tribe's WIC (nutrition for women and children) will be located at the clinic along with the Tribe's community health staff.

Tribal officials say staff at the Healing House will see up 20-30 patients per day. And that's just the beginning. The Tribe is already planning to further expand its health care facilities in the coming years.

*If you are interested in applying for a position at the Healing House, please check the Tribe's career website for new postings, or simply complete an employment application at this link.*

<https://suquamish.nsn.us/home/careers/>

**For more information, contact:**

Sarah van Gelder  
Suquamish Communications Manager  
206 491 0196

Jon Anderson  
Suquamish Communications Coordinator  
206 999 3912