



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### RE-AIM Coalition Reaches 1,000 Signatories and Delivers Open Letter to UHN CEO on AIM Closure

**August 20, 2025, Toronto, ON** – The RE-AIM Coalition today announced it has reached a milestone of **1,000 signatories** on its petition to reinstate the Asian Initiative in Mental Health (AIM) to its full capacity. Endorsed by service providers, healthcare professionals, community leaders, and service users, the petition reflects the community's strong and united demand for equitable, culturally, and linguistically appropriate mental health care.

Earlier today, the Coalition delivered an **open letter and the full list of signatories** to Dr. Kevin Smith, President and CEO of the University Health Network (UHN). The letter outlines the community's concerns about AIM's closure, its impact on service users, and the urgent need for meaningful engagement. While UHN has indicated a meeting with middle management is being arranged, the Coalition continues to call for a **direct meeting with the CEO** to ensure these concerns are addressed at the highest level.

Dozens of service providers and community members have shared their experiences with AIM over the years alongside their petition signatures. Below are selected excerpts that illustrate the importance of restoring AIM and its services:

*"I am a social worker who previously served racialized and Asian service users in the mental health system in Toronto, and now am a social work professor. Informed by my professional experiences, I strongly support the necessity of culturally specific and culturally appropriate services and support for service users who are located within multiple intersecting systems that structure their experiences of marginality and vulnerability." (Anh Ngo, Associate Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University)*

*"I felt my psychiatrist makes me feel at home and I feel comfortable to talk about my feeling using my own language. We have the same Asian background. She understands me and my situation. When we talk, I feel so eased. I admire my psychiatrist so much for their special role serving Asian patients.... It is crucial for Asian who don't speak much English have own psychiatrist who understands her background, speaks their language and provides sensitive care for people who experience mental health. It is not easy. Please don't make the situation harder. We need support. We are a community." [A patient of AIM]*

*"The Early Intervention in Psychosis program provided urgent care for me that I could not find elsewhere, and is part of the reason I have successfully recovered from one of the scariest experiences of my life. The cultural specificity of the AIM was crucial to this*

*outcome, given the nature of what happened to me. It hurts to think that others will not have access to this type of care moving forward.” [A patient of AIM/EIP]*

*“This clinic has immensely supported and guided my family through intergenerational ruptures that were influenced by cultural and linguistic barriers. I have seen many Western-informed clinics for 10 years that have failed to provide the same support that the AIM provided in healing the trauma my family have experienced, which was managed to be done so within a span of 1 year. The leadership team argued this can reduce wait times for patients, while I argue it will lengthen the duration of services and most importantly, the recovery time of patients due to the closure. Patients will now lack the clinic that has wonderfully offered rich culturally-specific and sensitive services that generalized Western clinics and approaches to mental health cannot provide. The change is ridiculous and no amount of PR jargon that I have seen in the news cannot change the fact that this cut in service is not about expanding services and lessening waittimes, but choosing a cut in services because the hospital fails to see from a health equity lens and would rather prioritize eurocentrism in health care system. One size cannot fit all.” [A patient of AIM]*

Since AIM’s closure on June 18, 2025, many have voiced deep concern about the loss of culturally adapted care and the disruption of trusted therapeutic relationships. The RE-AIM Coalition has gathered these personal accounts to highlight the importance of restoring AIM’s specialized services.

“AIM was a lifeline and a culturally safe space for our community,” said **Professor Josephine Wong**, from the RE-AIM Coalition. “Its closure has left a gap in care that cannot be filled by integrated generic services. We are calling on UHN to work with us to bring back this essential program.”

The RE-AIM Coalition encourages the public to continue showing their support by signing the petition at <https://re-aim.ca/sign-petition/>.

### **About the RE-AIM Coalition**

Formed in response to the abrupt closure of AIM, the RE-AIM Coalition is a broad alliance of healthcare leaders, service providers, community advocates, and allies committed to restoring vital services, demanding accountability, and reimagining culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health care for diverse communities.

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