



Press Release

Lives at Risk After Cut to Culturally Safe Mental Health Care

Toronto, ON — December 9, 2025 ---- The RE-AIM Coalition, a community-led advocacy group championing culturally and linguistically responsive mental health care, hosted a virtual Town Hall on December 3, 2025, to address the sudden closure of the Asian Initiative in Mental Health (AIM) Clinic. For more than 20 years, AIM--- formerly housed at University Health Network’s Toronto Western Hospital --- provided critical, culturally responsive mental health services to Asian communities across the Greater Toronto Area.

The event drew close to 130 participants, including patients, caregivers, health-care professionals, politicians, community advocates, and representatives from diverse racialized groups. Attendees shared powerful testimonies, creating an evening that was both poignant and deeply unifying.

Patients Warned: “This is a Life-and-Death Issue.”

A defining moment of the Town Hall came when three AIM patients living with severe and clinically complex mental health conditions shared their stories, revealing the urgent and devastating impact of the clinic’s closure. Their shocking disclosures made it clear that the closure is far more than an administrative realignment, but posing a directly threat to patient safety and continuity of care.

Yuk Han demonstrated how the once active link to the AIM Clinic in her cellphone now leads to an error message, experienced as a devastating loss of a trusted clinical lifeline.

Dino, who struggles with chronic self-harm and other mood and anxiety symptoms, cautioned that the long-term social and systemic costs of removing a culturally adapted clinic far exceeds any alleged administrative efficiencies.

Joy, who was previously featured by the media around her concerns about the AIM closure, had just recently survived a serious suicide attempt and remaining hospitalized. She shared that her worries about AIM contributed to her suicide attempt, and that timely access to AIM’s services might have prevented her crisis entirely.

A Call for Culturally Grounded Mental Health Care

The Town Hall amplified a shared concern: without AIM, high-acuity patients from Asian and other racialized communities are left without specialized, culturally attuned support that mainstream services are often not equipped to provide.



Quotes from the Presenters:

“The human impact is undeniable,” said **RE-AIM Coalition leaders**. “Patients must be at the centre of any future planning. Their voices—especially those most vulnerable—cannot be ignored.”

Dr. Joseph Wong, “Like services for the seniors, psychiatric services particularly have to be culturally and language appropriate. I would like to share my experience fighting against authorities against bias and insensitivities.”

“It is also about the kind of anti-Asian racism that has been rising, and an anti-immigrant sentiment that is happening out there.” said **Prof. Josephine Wong (TMU)**.

Alfred Lam (CICS) noted, “This is the part of the ongoing trend that we see in every level of society, in every level of government where initiatives that aim at achieving equity and diversity and inclusion are being dismantled.”

Dr. Chi Ming Chow (President of CCMS), who frequently refers patients to AIM, said, “With 60% of my patients being Cantonese- or Mandarin-speaking, we need to know how we can advocate together to ensure this level of care continues.”

Donna Alexander (SAPACCY) urged, “I’m hoping that folks will have some fight in them and will fight and will not just accept this because the hospital does not belong to whoever they think the hospital belongs to. The hospital belongs to us. The hospital belongs to the community. The hospital is ours.”

Prof. Jaswant Guzder (UBC) emphasized, “I join with you all in hoping that we can do something active in saying this is a politic of humanism. This is a politic of compassion.”



Lucetta Lam (**Director of Resource Development Living Water Counselling Centre**) warned, “As a social worker, I can tell you that the AIM closure is not a small problem. It is a severe mental health crisis.”

Lucy Costa (LL.M, Deputy Executive Director of The Empowerment Council, CAMH) emphasized “...stereotypes and racism that Asian communities face, and the long-standing underrepresentation of mental health service users in healthcare. I don't believe there's been enough attention paid to how this has been disproportionately affecting people on the margins.”

Paul Bailey (BHA) said, “We are fighting the same forces here. ...If you can imagine it, you can create it. Working together, believing in what our community needs—that is how we won before, and that is how we will win again.”

“Maintaining AIM is a matter of social justice,” stated **Prof. Roy Moodley (OISE)**. “Every person deserves mental health care in this city, in this province, in this country.”

RE-AIM reaffirmed its commitment to working with patients, families, health-care partners, and policymakers to ensure that culturally responsive mental health services remain available, accessible, and adequately supported.

For media inquiries or to request an interview, please contact Ms. Yin Sin Tso at (416) 992-6586 or the RE-AIM Coalition media team via co-chair@re-aim.ca.



Caption: Joy is still in inpatient care, navigating the difficult path of recovery.



Caption: The loss of AIM's culturally and linguistically matched care has created uncertainty for patients.



Caption: Dino said the closure of AIM is shocking and difficult to understand.