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Alumni Magazine Issue No. 34 — Fall/Winter 2026-2027



Mind | Body | Spirit

Naturopathic Medicine in Canada's North

Creating meaningful impact
through community, connection,
and a commitment to others

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Dr. Afsoun Khalili, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2003) has been a vital member of CCNM’s community since her time as a student.

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Cover photo: Dr. Madison Isenor, ND (CCNM – Boucher Class of 2025)



Recent graduate Neena-Soma Gunpat (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2026)

Message from the President

Our theme for this issue of *Mind/Body/Spirit* is 'Naturopathic Medicine in Canada's North.' Often, we associate practising with service, a word we use often in the profession. But what does it truly mean, and how does it relate to naturopathic medicine?



At its core, service is an ideal, an action, and a responsibility. It informs how we relate to people seeking naturopathic therapies and guides the treatments we provide to support their well-being. The profession's six core principles are further expressions of service and remain the foundation of patient care.

For many NDs, the desire to serve others through individualized, whole-person health is often what draws them to the profession and continues to inspire throughout their careers.

This is of particular note in Canada's North, where a small yet passionate group of NDs, including CCNM graduates Dr. Madison Isenor, ND (CCNM – Boucher Class of 2025), Dr. Kyla Wright, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2012) and Dr. Shahin Moslehi, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2014), support the health and well-being of communities navigating unique geographic, environmental, and logistical challenges.

Service as Stewardship

In October, I had the privilege of speaking at CCNM's alumni mix-and-mingle event during the Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors' conference. The alumni in attendance told me how proud they were to be affiliated with the College, and indeed, there is much to be proud of.

In the realms of research, clinical care, academic delivery, and partnerships, CCNM is making great strides: expanding our evidence base, caring for patients across Ontario and

British Columbia, providing pioneering case-based education, and offering more educational opportunities for learners at every stage.

These successes exist, in part, due to the efforts of our ND community, from researchers to educators to mentors.

Stewardship is a collective responsibility that ensures CCNM and the naturopathic profession continue to grow. From financial support to creating employment opportunities for our newest graduates, alumni investment in the College ensures that our future is shaped by meaningful progress and rooted in the values of service.

Service as Impact

In this issue of the alumni magazine, you will read more stories of alumni who exemplify service in its many forms.

Learn more about two remarkable graduates from the Class of 2026, Marnie Anderson and Neena-Soma Gunpat, whose sense of duty developed early in their lives and flourished throughout their studies at CCNM.

Research is foundational to the profession and essential to advancing our understanding of the efficacy of therapeutic approaches. Explore nutrition through a broader lens – one that extends beyond what we eat to examine how we plan, prepare, and engage with food – with Dr. Gina Brown, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2022) and her research on teaching kitchens.

One of CCNM's most impressive qualities is its close-knit culture, which creates a special and meaningful environment to work and learn. One of our distinguished professors and clinic supervisors, Dr. Afsoun Khalili, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2003), shares her dedication toward fostering this environment.

Service as Purpose

As you read through this issue, I encourage you to contemplate your personal relationship to service.

Is supporting patients on their health journeys what drives you? Does your passion lie in research? Are you motivated by a desire to strengthen the profession through advocacy and leadership? Are you energized by building healthier, more resilient communities?

Whatever form your commitment to service takes, know that your contributions have the power to create meaningful and lasting impact within your community and beyond. On behalf of the entire CCNM community, thank you for the care you provide, the knowledge you share, and/or the example you set for future naturopathic medicine doctors.

Dr. Rahim Karim
B.Sc., DC, MBA, CHE, ICD.D
President & CEO

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Practising Naturopathic Medicine in Canada's North

Rural and northern communities
offer a unique professional path for NDs



By most geographic and political definitions, Northern Canada refers to the vast northernmost region of the country encompassing Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. This area covers nearly half of Canada's total landmass and is home to rugged topography, vibrant Indigenous cultures, and iconic species of wildlife not encountered anywhere else.

For NDs, Canada's North represents an opportunity to pursue a vision of naturopathic practice that combines professional growth, expanded scopes of practice, and meaningful community engagement. Drawing on the full breadth of their clinical training, NDs help to expand access to primary and preventive care by becoming an important – and often the first – point of contact for individuals and families.

While the realities of distance, extreme weather, and limited medical infrastructure present continuing challenges, NDs frequently find northern practice especially rewarding because of the ability to use a wide range of naturopathic therapies and build lasting relationships with patients and communities.

Gravity Health Whitehorse, Yukon

**Dr. Madison Isenor, ND
(CCNM – Boucher Class of 2025)**

Finding a Purpose in Yukon

From a young age, Dr. Madison Isenor, ND (CCNM – Boucher Class of 2025) knew that naturopathic medicine was her intended career path.

Growing up in Calgary, Alberta, she worked in a health food store before later joining the administrative team at a naturopathic clinic owned by Dr. Meghan McCollum, ND (CCNM – Boucher Class of 2010). This early exposure to complementary health care helped shape her fascination with physiology, supplements, and supporting people to find answers to their health concerns.

After returning to her undergraduate studies as a mature student, she completed a health sciences degree at Mount Royal University before enrolling at the CCNM – Boucher Campus. She remembers choosing the West Coast location due to its proximity to Calgary, rigorous biomedical training, and well-renowned reputation for preparing students for eventual clinical practice. And it was during her first year that the seed for practising in Northern Canada took root.

"The Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors (CAND) presented to my class about the need for more NDs in northern communities," she says. "That stayed with me. My husband and I had a dream of acreage and freedom that wouldn't be possible in a big city. We're also backpackers – we love hiking and the outdoors. We had traveled the Chilkoot Trail in 2019, and the land felt special to us. That's when I started looking into Whitehorse and exploring what a potential career might look like."

"The Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors (CAND) presented to my class about the need for more NDs in northern communities. That stayed with me... I started looking into Whitehorse and exploring what a potential career might look like."

**Dr. Madison Isenor, ND
(CCNM – Boucher Class of 2025)**



Over the course of her naturopathic medical education, Dr. Isenor met Dr. Bobby Parmar, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2007), and Dr. Paul Maximus, ND (CCNM – Boucher Class of 2018), the co-owners of Gravity Health Clinics in Vancouver and Whitehorse. She immediately clicked with their evidence-based approach to naturopathic care, completing a year-long externship at the clinic and handling part-time office duties. When an opening to practise in Yukon's capital city presented itself following convocation and regulatory exams, Dr. Isenor immediately grabbed it.

Practicing in Whitehorse

Dr. Isenor's first year in practice has pushed her to think broadly, adapt quickly, and utilize every tool available within the naturopathic scope to address patient concerns.

"Lack of access to care is a key challenge here," she explains. "There are longer wait times, and many people don't have a family doctor. Sometimes, I end up being the first medical professional they see about the health challenge they're experiencing, and it's my job to rule out the foundational issues before diving deeper into individualized treatment. This is the kind of medicine I've always

wanted to practice. Keeping a broad differential diagnosis makes me stay curious, constantly read emerging research papers, stay up-to-date on practice guidelines, and ask questions."

She has relied on Dr. Parmar and Dr. Maximus to guide and support her through the transition of practising in Northern Canada. They meet four times a week to review cases and discuss treatment protocols, and that constant mentorship has been a fundamental component of Dr. Isenor's success. She recommends that any graduate considering a move to a rural or northern community ensure they have a supportive group of NDs in their corner.

"I entered CCNM as an older student compared to many of my peers, and I've been in this field for a really long time. But learning about health conditions in school and treating them in real life are two very different experiences. Having someone to lean on as you develop your practice is so valuable."

Dr. Isenor's patients have found her presence valuable, too. Their gratitude isn't just reserved for her compassionate and service-oriented care – many Northerners are genuinely pleased to learn that Dr. Isenor is not a "fly-in,

fly-out" practitioner and has decided to settle in Whitehorse permanently.

Northern winters can be unforgiving. While the weather will bestow its own set of trials – temperatures approaching -50°C, weeks of heavy snowfall, and the inevitable dead car battery before leaving for work – Dr. Isenor believes the community deserves health-care providers who are willing to face the same circumstances they do.

"In most urban areas, schedules in naturopathic clinics will empty whenever there's adverse weather. But here in Whitehorse, people drive through the freezing fog, manage icy roads, and show up. For me, service isn't about convenience; it's about being dependable, even when it's really hard to do," she says.

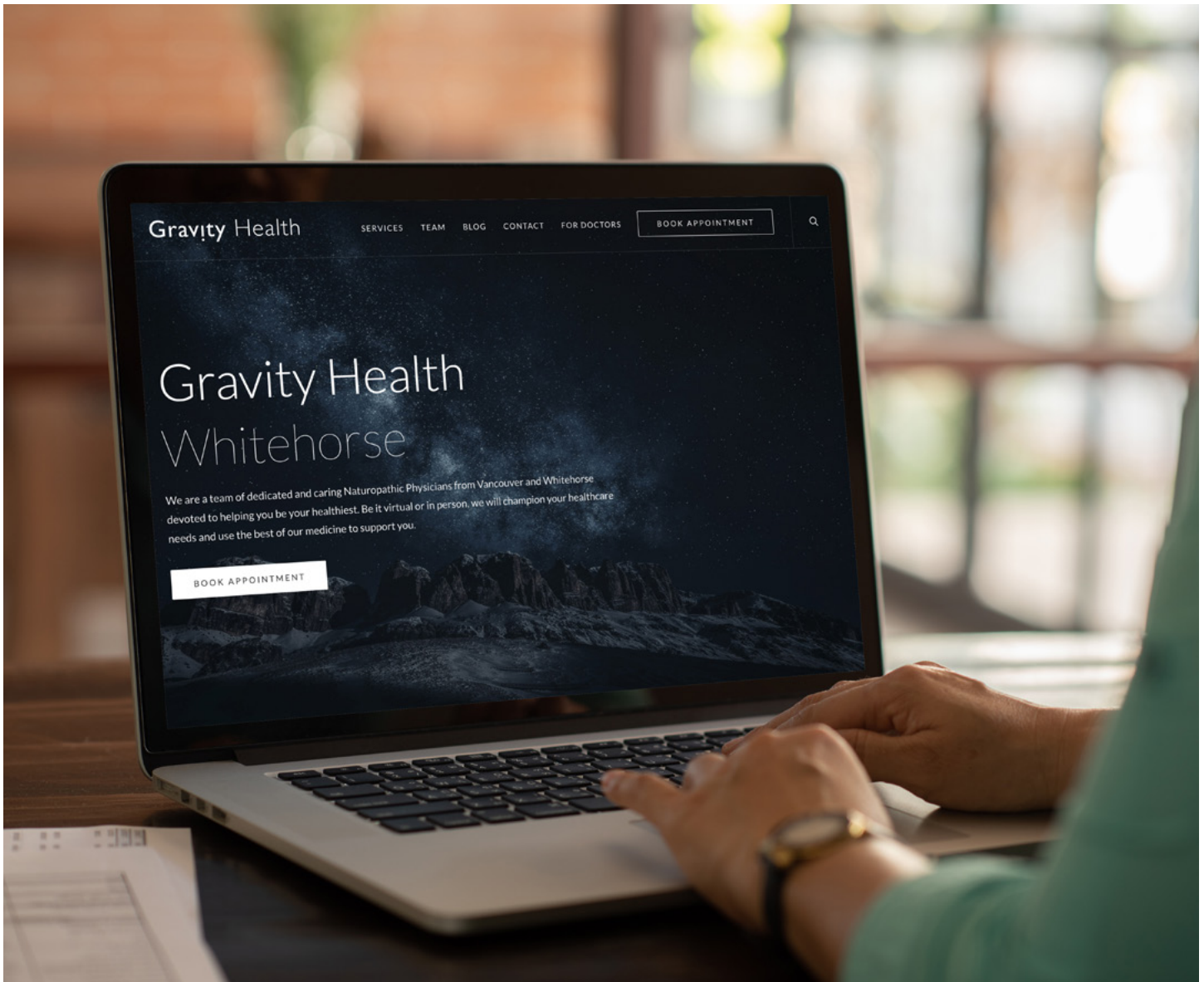
"Communities will invest in people who choose to stay, and they want their health-care provider to be somebody who understands and embraces the challenges, the opportunities, and the way of life."

Learn more about:

Dr. Madison Isenor, ND
gravityhealthwhitehorse.com

Gravity Health Clinics are located in Whitehorse and Vancouver and co-owned by Dr. Bobby Parmar, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2007), and Dr. Paul Maximus, ND (CCNM – Boucher Class of 2018)





Dr. Madison Isenor, ND
(CCNM – Boucher Class of 2025)



Dr. Bobby Parmar, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2007)



Dr. Paul Maximus, ND
(CCNM – Boucher Class of 2018)

Rekindle Health Yellowknife, N.W.T.

Dr. Kyla Wright, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2012)
Dr. Shahin Moslehi
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2014)

A Shared Vision for Health in the North

For Dr. Shahin Moslehi, ND, and Dr. Kyla Wright, ND, the journey to naturopathic medicine began in very different places.

Born and raised in Cambridge, Ontario, Dr. Moslehi was first introduced to the profession through his aunt, Dr. Farah Mirzaagha, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2002). After experiencing his own health challenges growing up, he began investigating approaches to healing beyond conventional medicine. His aunt's influence, along with observing the impact of Ayurvedic care during regular visits to India for treatment, inspired a desire to help others facing chronic illness.

"Ultimately, I wanted to provide others with the same type of support that helped me," the CCNM – Toronto Class of 2014 graduate says. "It inspired me to want to give back to humanity in any way that I could."

The path for Dr. Wright (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2012) originated much farther north. She was raised in the Northwest Territories, also known as *Denendeh*, the traditional Dene word for "the land of the people." The land, water, and relationships she formed with communities shaped her understanding of health and community building. Witnessing the many ways health and healing were understood outside the strict biomedical framework generated an interest in learning about alternative approaches to medicine, which eventually led her to research the naturopathic profession.

The transition to CCNM was itself a culture shock for Dr. Wright. Traveling to Toronto for the first time meant trading northern wilderness for summer heat, bumper-to-bumper traffic, and a sprawling urban centre unlike anything she had previously experienced. Dr. Moslehi's initiation to the North would come later, after graduation, when he visited Yellowknife for the first time and discovered a part of Canada he knew little about growing up. While the environment and isolation compared to Southern Ontario initially shocked him, he now considers the Northwest Territories home.

"Ultimately, I wanted to provide others with the same type of support that helped me. It inspired me to want to give back to humanity in any way that I could."

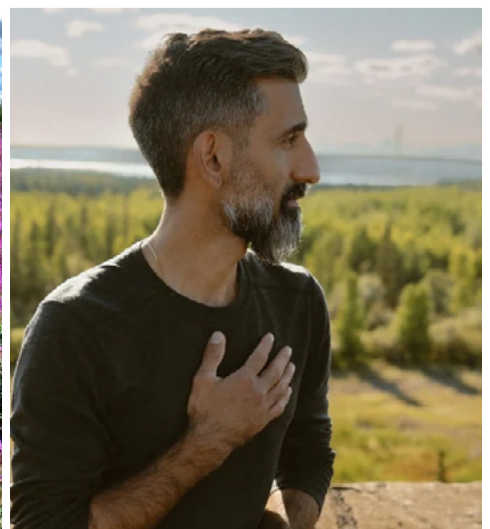
Dr. Shahin Moslehi, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2014)

Dr. Kyla Wright, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2012)
and Dr. Shahin Moslehi
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2014)
operate their clinic Rekindle
Health in Yellowknife,
Northwest Territories.





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Dr. Kyla Wright, ND, and Dr. Shahin Moslehi, ND, at home in Yellowknife.

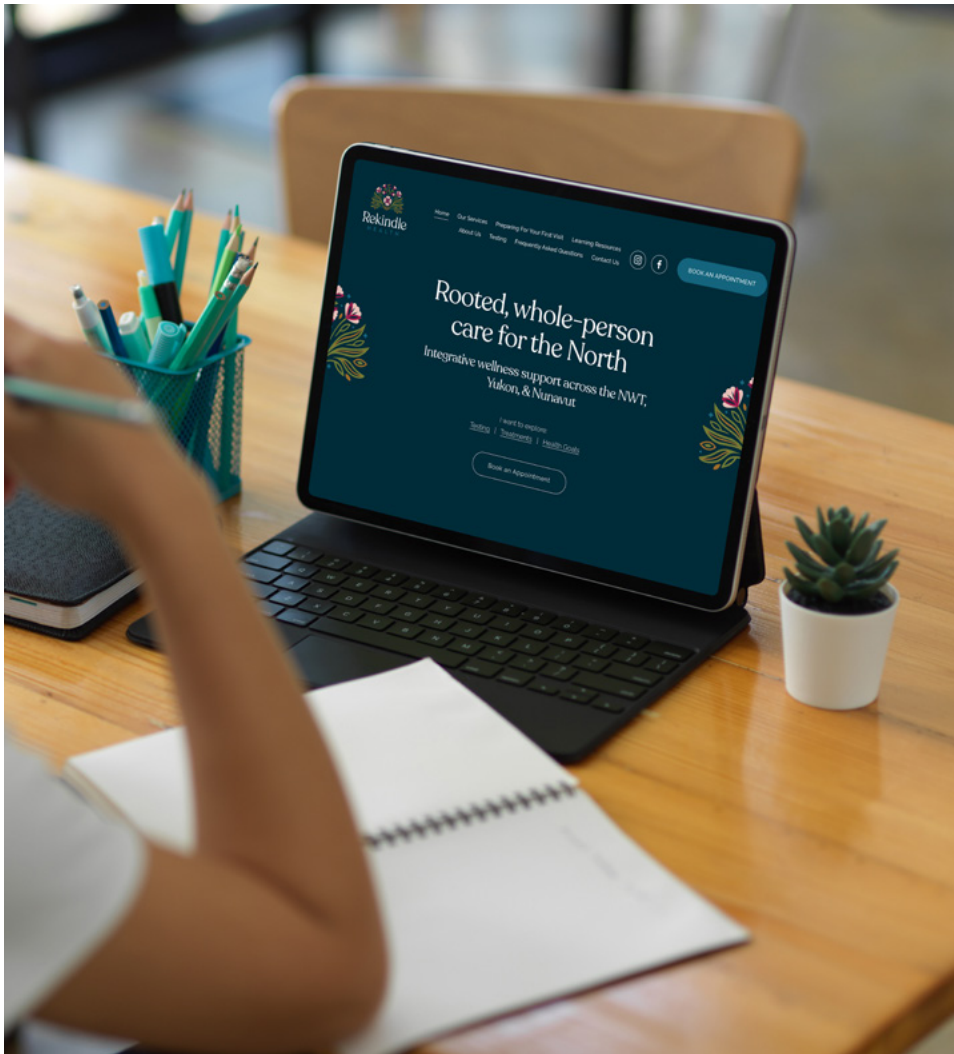
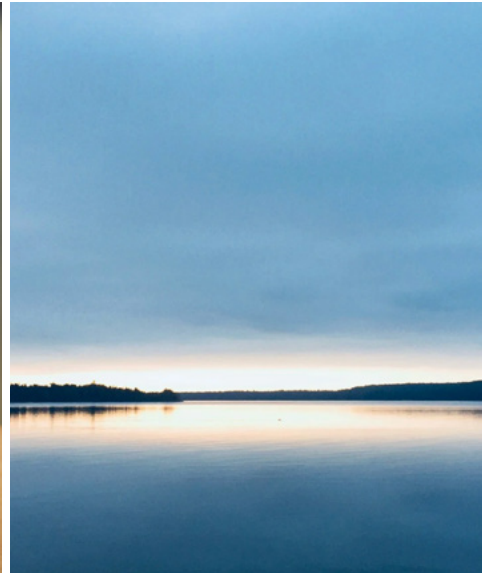
The two met while studying at the CCNM – Toronto Campus. Returning to the Northwest Territories and opening a clinical practice was always the plan for Dr. Wright. Luckily, her co-owner and partner in life needed little convincing.

“Shahin and I have this shared vision for what health and wellness could look like in the Northwest Territories,” Dr. Wright explains. “After over 10 years of working with the residents here and listening to their needs, they have shared a strong idea of what true integrative and collaborative care means. We personally believe that it’s based in community, and our clinic hopes to reflect that.”

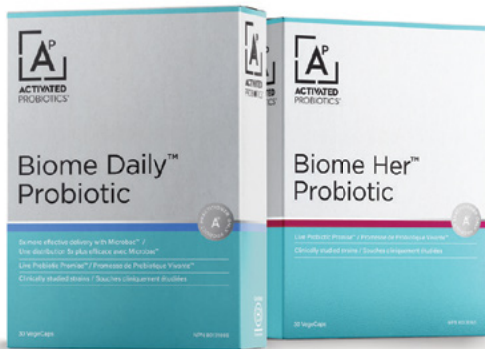
Their clinic – Rekindle Health – is still maturing and settling into its purpose. Patients can book appointments with three NDs (including Dr. Wright and Dr. Moslehi), a lactation specialist, an osteopath, a counsellor, a registered massage therapist, and a registered nurse trained in advanced foot care. Eventually, the plan is to continue developing the clinic into a low-barrier space where people can attend workshops, access health services and information, and build relationships that flourish beyond one-on-one patient care.

“Shahin and I have this shared vision for what health and wellness could look like in the Northwest Territories.”

Dr. Kyla Wright, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2012)



Rekindle Health, located in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories; Dr. Wright and Dr. Moslehi enjoy a hiking trip with their family.



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The Social Determinants of Health

Their work also extends outside the walls of Rekindle Health. In Northern, rural, and remote regions, naturopathic health care requires some creativity and flexibility. The gaps in the medical system are well-documented and include provider shortages, increased staff burnout, and fragmented care. NDs are equipped to fill these gaps, and typical conditions seen in these patient populations include a spectrum of complex and chronic diseases, ranging from managing late-stage diagnoses, mental health, metabolic disorders, and reproductive health, to name a few.

Part of practising in these communities is acknowledging the political, geographical, and historical barriers that adversely affect overall health. For example, in areas where fresh foods or canned goods are limited or prohibitively expensive, recommending a textbook dietary treatment plan may cause harm to a patient without accounting for the practical realities of the environment.

"Recognizing how health and disease present in certain populations requires both an individualized approach and an understanding of the wider social context that determines how people experience their lives," Dr. Wright says. "Combining both allows us to become better practitioners. If we neglect that, our medicine essentially becomes meaningless."

"I don't think you can practise naturopathic medicine and recite the naturopathic oath without having the spirit of wanting to serve any community needing your care," Dr. Moslehi adds. "If you've chosen a career in naturopathic medicine, then serving humanity is your profession."

Models of Mentorship

When Dr. Wright and Dr. Moslehi began practising in Yellowknife, they did so under the mentorship of Dr. Nicole Redvers, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2010). Her practice, Gaia Integrative Clinic, was integral in furthering the health-care options of people living in

"I don't think you can practise naturopathic medicine and recite the naturopathic oath without having the spirit of wanting to serve any community needing your care."

Dr. Shahin Moslehi, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2014)

"If you're planning to open your practice in a rural or remote location, you're not alone. There are so many NDs willing to support that process and foster access to the community."

Dr. Kyla Wright, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2012)
pictured with Dr. Shahin Moslehi, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2014)



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the Northwest Territories. While Dr. Redvers has since transitioned to a career in academia, Dr. Wright and Dr. Moslehi are honoured to uphold the same standard of naturopathic care in the area.

Last year, Rekindle Health had a presence at CCNM's Career Expo to spread awareness about and bring exposure to clinical care in underserved and remote areas. Dr. Moslehi and Dr. Wright are also active with the Northwest Territories Association of Naturopathic Doctors (NTAND) (serving as secretary and president, respectively). Dr. Moslehi sits on the board of the CAND, while Dr. Wright regularly participates in

national forums. Both represent the voice of North-based NDs in Canada-wide conversations about the future of the profession.

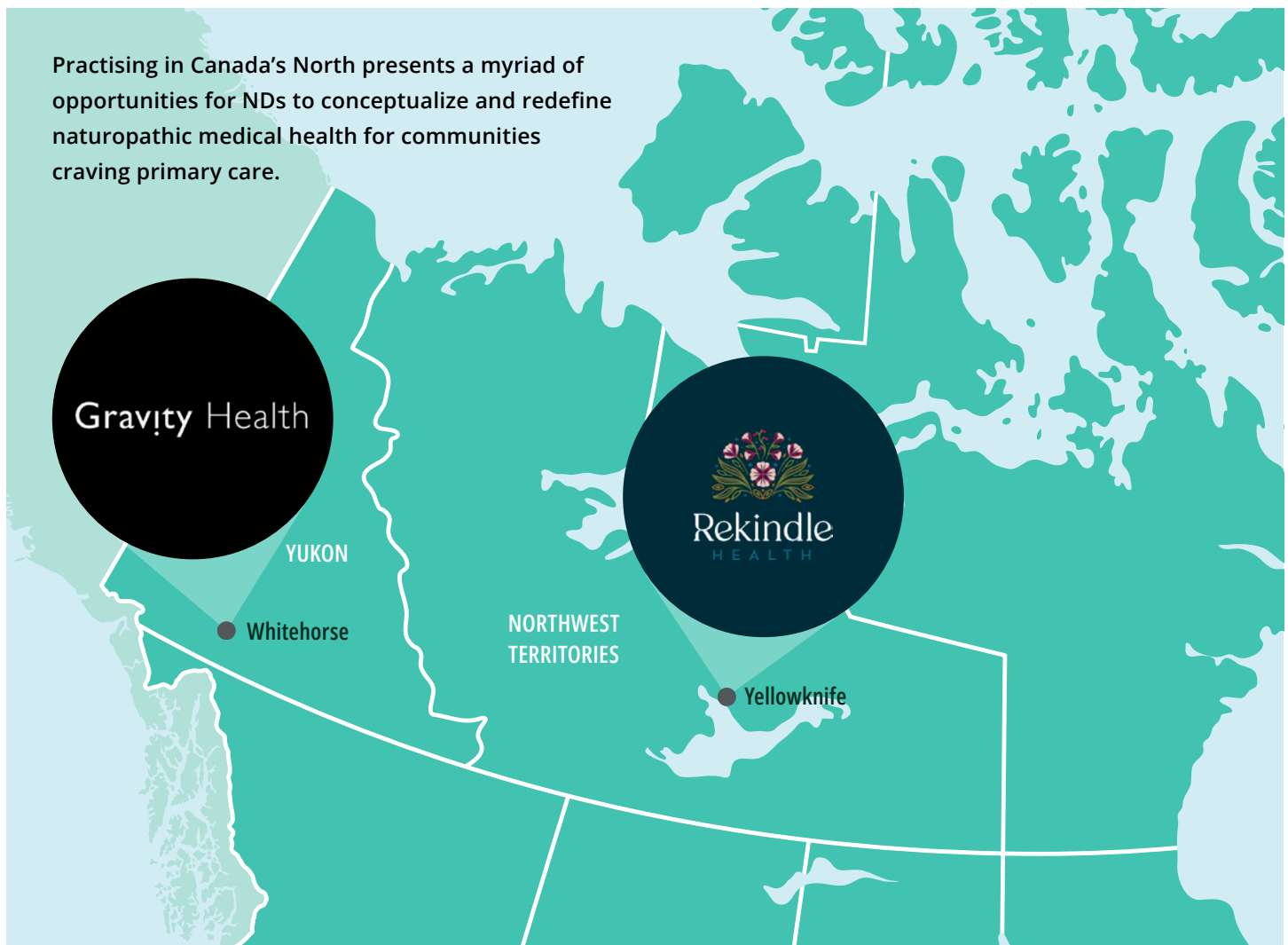
The Northwest Territories also enjoys one of the broadest scopes of practice in the country, which may provide a plethora of opportunities to a graduate seeking a change of pace or committed to filling an unmet need within the broader health-care ecosystem. They note that it's crucial, especially in less-populated swaths of the country, to reach out to NDs already in practice.

"If you're planning to open your practice in a rural or remote location, you're not alone," Dr. Wright emphasizes.

"There are so many NDs willing to support that process and foster connection to the community. Reach out to learn more about the experience of clinical care in these settings – even if you think it might not be for you, there's certainly no harm in learning."

Learn more about:

Dr. Kyla Wright, ND
Dr. Shahin Moslehi, ND
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Service Through Education, Compassion, and Health Care

Marnie Anderson
(CCNM – Boucher
Class of 2026) shares
how teaching led
her to pursue
naturopathic medicine



Meet Marnie Anderson (CCNM – Boucher Class of 2026). She was the co-recipient of the Humanitarian Award at convocation and helped win the 2025 Naturopathic Student Medical Association (NMSA) Cup with the CCNM – Boucher team in Palm Springs, California. Marnie’s primary interests include metabolic health, chronic and complex disease, and innovative approaches to personalized medicine. She plans to remain in Vancouver after graduation while staying open to opportunities to contribute to global health equity, both locally and internationally.

“During the earthquake in Mexico I saw the collaboration between health-care providers: physiotherapists, general practitioners, TCM doctors, and energy practitioners working together to help people who were suffering.”

Marnie Anderson
(CCNM – Boucher Class of 2026)

Q What originally inspired you to pursue naturopathic medicine, and why did you choose to attend CCNM?

A – On September 19, 2017, there was a devastating earthquake in Mexico that caused damage in the Mexican states of Puebla and Morelos and in the greater Mexico City area. I was working as an international teacher in Monterrey, Mexico at the time, but for the 2018–2019 school year I relocated to Mexico City so I could be directly involved with disaster relief efforts with the Tzu Chi International Medical Association. I continued to teach full-time and was directly involved in helping to organize multiple medical outreaches that served the local communities. It was there that I saw the collaboration between health-care providers: physiotherapists, general

practitioners, TCM doctors, and energy practitioners, all working together to help people who were suffering. It was in those tender moments that I witnessed the power of care and love and how they impact on a person’s well-being. This was the start of the steps I was to take to enroll at the CCNM – Boucher Campus and become a naturopathic physician.

Q Where do you see yourself practising, and what areas of focus or patient populations are you most passionate about?

A – I am passionate about metabolic health, genomics, quantum medicine, oncology and chronic illness, and working with underserved populations, locally and globally. I am equally passionate about education and its deep impacts on future generations.



On September 19, 2017, a devastating earthquake caused extensive damage in Puebla, Morelos, and Mexico City. Marnie Anderson relocated her teaching position to assist in the relief efforts.

**Marnie Anderson
(CCNM – Boucher
Class of 2026)**



- Co-recipient of the CCNM Humanitarian Award upon graduation (2026)
- Recipient of the Dr. Nicole Robinson Memorial Award (2025)
- Recipient of the NFH Scholarship for Community Excellence (2025)



As a new CCNM graduate, what excites you most about the future of naturopathic medicine?

A – I was working online as a teacher during the COVID pandemic. It was extremely difficult for both teachers and students, and the students suffered greatly in terms of academic performance, social skills, and mental well-being. It was there and then that I understood the importance of human interactions and relationships and the price we pay if they are not nurtured. I personally don't think that professions like teaching and medicine will be fully outsourced by AI in the future because both professions require deep empathy and a high level of accountability.

Naturopathic medicine has the power to support people with the care they deserve. It offers time to educate them on facets of their health and to foster a therapeutic relationship that empowers each individual. I have been privileged to learn a variety of techniques and modalities that will be available to me within my own practice and it is my job to determine how I can best provide care.



How does service align with your approach to naturopathic medicine?

A – It is everything. As a teacher and an ND, I believe in servant leadership, where I work to empower others with compassion and care. I have had the privilege of working and being mentored by some of the most intelligent and selfless people I have ever known, and I am grateful to them for helping shape how I show up every day. I also had the privilege of participating in a medical outreach to Malawi in July 2024 alongside a physician and a close friend I had first met while living in Mexico. This experience reinforced how seemingly small connections can shape the course of our lives and extend far beyond what we initially imagine.



Marnie Anderson at the CCNM – Boucher Campus during her internship year; participating in a medical outreach program in Malawi, July 2024.



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Finding Purpose in Naturopathic Medicine

CCNM – Toronto Class of 2026 graduate,
Neena-Soma Gunpat, on service, health, and community



Meet Neena-Soma Gunpat (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2026), a lifelong learner who attended CCNM to uncover the ‘why’ of disease. During her time at the College, Neena-Soma was anchored in student life, co-winning the Community Spirit Award at convocation and reaffirming her commitment to a life of service, kindness, and creating spaces for people to come together.

Q What originally inspired you to pursue naturopathic medicine, and why did you choose to attend CCNM?

A – My first introduction to naturopathic medicine came through my childhood best friend. As her father was undergoing naturopathic care during his cancer journey, I learned the impact an ND could have on an entire family. It was the first time I began to understand health care as something that could extend beyond treating disease.

Not long after, I experienced my own health turning point when I required emergency surgery to remove my appendix. I will always be grateful for the hospital team who cared for me in that moment, but the experience left me asking a different question: *Why did this happen?* That experience sparked a curiosity where I wanted to understand not only how to treat illness, but why it develops in the first place.

This led me to see an ND for myself, where we began connecting the dots in my own health. I learned how chronic stress was influencing my gut health, how my gut affected my hormones and skin, and how deeply the nervous system intertwines

with every aspect of well-being. It completely changed how I viewed health, not as a collection of separate symptoms, but as an interconnected story.

Natural medicine also felt familiar. Growing up in an Indo-Caribbean family, herbal teas, home remedies, and traditional healing practices were simply part of everyday life. Naturopathic medicine felt like a beautiful intersection between the wisdom I grew up with and evidence-informed health care.

Soon after, I began working at a naturopathic clinic, where I had the privilege of hearing patients share stories of healing, resilience, and gratitude. Those conversations reinforced everything I had come to believe, that this profession is about walking alongside people through some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives.

When it came time to choose a school, CCNM felt like the natural fit. I wanted an education that would challenge me academically while teaching me to care for the whole person. Over the past four years, CCNM has shaped not only the clinician I have become, but also the person I hope to be: a lifelong learner who leads with curiosity, compassion, and a genuine desire to understand each patient's story.

Q Where do you see yourself practising, and what areas of focus or patient populations are you most passionate about?

A – I will be returning home to Mississauga, Ontario, where I can care for the community that helped shape me.

Throughout my time at CCNM, I've discovered that I'm most passionate about women's health and pediatrics, particularly the intersection of gut health, skin health, hormones, and nervous system regulation.

Pediatrics has always held a special place in my heart. Long before becoming an ND, I found joy in mentoring children, working with youth of all abilities, and creating environments where they felt seen, capable, and supported. That passion has only grown through my clinical experiences on the pediatric focus shift, and opportunities to educate parents through evidence-based writing. I hope to become the kind of practitioner who not only cares for children but empowers entire families to build healthy foundations that last a lifetime.



Moments at CCNM, from L-R: Neena-Soma Gunpat receiving her degree at the 2026 convocation ceremony; at CCNM Coffeehouse, an annual talent show for students; with Megan Donaghy-Hughes, fellow CCNM – Toronto Class of 2026 graduate.



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Q Looking back on four years at CCNM, what experiences (clinical, academic, or personal) had the biggest impact on you?

A – Without question, it was the people.

Clinically, I had the privilege of caring for patients across every stage of life, from young children to older adults, and each encounter reminded me that every person brings a unique story into the treatment room.

Outside of clinic, one of the most meaningful parts of my time at CCNM was founding the CCNM Makes Music Club and helping organize our annual Coffeehouse Talent Show. Music has always been a huge part of my life, but what made those evenings so special was watching a community come together. The Coffeehouse became a space where students could step away from the demands of medicine and simply be themselves.

But perhaps what I'll cherish most are the friendships I built along the way. These are the people who celebrated every milestone, sat beside me during long study sessions, brought me tea during busy clinic shifts, stood beside me as my creative ideas came to life, and reminded me to laugh when exams felt overwhelming. Their unwavering support became one of the greatest gifts of my time at CCNM.

Q What advice would you give to someone considering a future career in naturopathic medicine?

A – Choose this profession because you genuinely love people.

Naturopathic medicine is a career for the lifelong learner, the curious thinker, and the person who finds meaning in walking alongside others through their health journeys. The science is important, but so is your ability to listen, adapt, and continue growing.

One lesson that has stayed with me is that every person you meet leaves something with you. We become a mosaic of the people, places, experiences, and patients who shape us. If you're willing to remain open to learning, not only from textbooks, but from your patients and colleagues, you'll continue becoming a better practitioner throughout your career.

Most importantly, lead with empathy. If you can put yourself in someone else's shoes, understand their story before their symptoms, and make them feel seen, you'll never underestimate the impact you can have.

As my mentor once shared with me, medicine changes lives, but often it's the way we make people feel that they remember most.

Q As a new CCNM graduate, what excites you most about the future of naturopathic medicine?

A – What excites me most is the opportunity to help redefine what health care can look like. I believe we're entering a time when patients are: looking for more than symptom management, they're looking for partnership. They want to understand why they're experiencing certain health concerns, how lifestyle influences well-being, and how they can actively participate in their own health.

I envision a future where collaborative care becomes the norm, with NDs working alongside other health-care professionals to provide comprehensive, patient-centred care. Root-cause medicine has the power to improve individual lives while creating healthier communities as a whole, and I'm excited to contribute to that future.

Q How does service align with your approach to naturopathic medicine?

A – To me, service is the foundation of naturopathic medicine. Every interaction we have with a patient is an opportunity

to serve, not only by providing treatment but by offering education, compassion, reassurance, and hope. Our profession is built on helping people live healthier, fuller lives, and that begins with meeting them exactly where they are.

Throughout my life, whether volunteering in my community, mentoring children, leading student organizations, or working in clinic, I've learned that service isn't always about grand gestures. Often, it's found in the small moments: listening without interruption, encouraging someone who feels discouraged, creating spaces where people feel they belong, or helping a patient believe in themselves again.

Who are we as health-care providers if we aren't serving our communities? Service isn't separate from naturopathic medicine; it is naturopathic medicine. It reminds us that our role extends beyond prescribing treatments. We are educators, advocates, collaborators, and trusted partners in our patients' lives. That responsibility is both a privilege and the reason I chose this profession.

Q What accomplishment from your time at CCNM are you most proud of?

A – Receiving the Community Spirit Award at graduation is an accomplishment I will always hold close to my heart, not because of the award itself, but because of what it represented.

What made that moment especially emotional was realizing it had come full circle. The very first award I ever received was the Spirit Award at my Grade 5 graduation in 2010. Sixteen years later, receiving the same recognition as I graduated from CCNM felt like a reminder that the values I've always tried to live by – kindness, service, creativity, and building community – have remained constant throughout my life.

Congratulations CCNM – Toronto Class of 2026



CCNM – Toronto Class of 2026, Toronto, Ontario

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A Recipe for Service

How Dr. Gina Brown, ND
is exploring the role of teaching
kitchens in building
healthier communities



When Dr. Gina Brown, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2022), talks about nutrition, she’s talking about more than just food. She’s talking about people – their lives, the challenges they face, and the realities that shape their health.

“We can give somebody the perfect recommendation, but they can still face all kinds of barriers – how expensive something is, their environment, culture, access to things, etc. Health behaviours don’t exist in a vacuum.”

**Dr. Gina Brown, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2022)**

“We can give somebody the perfect recommendation,” she says, “but they can still face all kinds of barriers – how expensive something is, their environment, culture, access to things, etc. Health behaviours don’t exist in a vacuum.”

That perspective has helped shape Dr. Brown’s career. After completing undergraduate degrees in nutrition and kinesiology at Saint Francis Xavier University, she worked in hospital nutrition services and contributed to research that helped improve recovery after surgery by changing when patients were encouraged to eat. It was there that the seed for research was planted. By the time she arrived at CCNM, she had found the perfect place to combine her passion for nutrition with evidence-based medicine.

“I’ve always had a passion for evidence-based medicine,” she says. “I really wanted to advance the role of naturopathic doctors in research because, oftentimes, we’re left out of those conversations.”

That passion led Dr. Brown to a research project (and subsequent Student Innovation Fund Award) that has remained with her long after graduation – a comprehensive scoping review examining teaching kitchens across Canada and the United States.

The Impact of Food Preparation and Nutrition

Teaching kitchens go far beyond cooking classes. They combine nutrition education with hands-on food preparation, helping people build the practical skills needed to make healthy eating part of everyday life.

“I’ve always had a passion for evidence-based medicine. I really wanted to advance the role of naturopathic doctors in research because, oftentimes, we’re left out of those conversations.”

**Dr. Gina Brown, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2022)**



"A lot of nutrition programs tell people what they should eat," Dr. Brown explains. "But participants in a teaching kitchen actually get to practise planning, preparing, and adapting meals in a supportive environment. Knowing food is nutritious isn't the same as knowing how to shop for it, prepare it, or make it fit into your life."

The project has grown into a large-scale review of more than 400 studies, exploring how teaching kitchens are being used in hospitals, schools, clinics, and community organizations to improve nutrition knowledge, cooking confidence, and chronic disease prevention. Dr. Brown hopes the research will provide a clearer picture of where teaching kitchens are making an impact while encouraging further research in the field.

In addition, she hopes it demonstrates that naturopathic doctors have an important role to play in public health.

"We know nutrition, prevention, and patient education are strengths of naturopathic medicine," she says.

"But it's not enough for our profession to just claim those areas. We need to demonstrate that we can contribute to them competently, ethically, and in ways that create measurable value."

For Dr. Brown, a commitment to evidence is central to how she serves her patients.

"Service really means recognizing people's realities," she says. "It means asking whether our recommendations are actually realistic, accessible, and relevant."

Whether she's working with patients in her Halifax, Nova Scotia practice or contributing to research that could shape future health programs, Dr. Brown is guided by the same principle: meeting people where they are.

For her, that's what service looks like – not simply offering advice, but creating practical, evidence-informed solutions that empower people to build healthier lives, one meal at a time.

Learn more about Dr. Gina Brown, ND:

evolveintegratedhealth.com
fairfieldfamilyhealth.com
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Dr. Brown's interim analysis of teaching kitchens for CCNM's Research Day.



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CCNM's Career Expo Connects Students, Graduates, and NDs Across Canada

Supporting professional growth in
naturopathic medicine for nearly 10 years



What began as a small career networking initiative in 2008 has grown into an annual, pan-Canadian event connecting CCNM fourth-year students and recent graduates with naturopathic clinics, residency supervisors, preceptors, and representatives from the natural health industry.

Originally conceived by CCNM Dean, Dr. Nick De Groot, ND (non-clinical), and spearheaded by the Advancement and Alumni Relations department, the Career Expo provides students with direction and support as they transition into professional practice. Over the years, the event has evolved in scope. Now, it is an integrated component of CCNM's case-based curriculum, specifically within the Art and Practice of Naturopathic Medicine course stream, which prioritizes the development of networking skills and enables students to explore the many career paths available to them after graduation.

Delivered through the Gatherly virtual platform, the half-day event offers an accessible and streamlined experience for participants from both CCNM campuses and allows attendees to join from anywhere in the country. Each potential employer – known as an exhibitor – hosts an online booth to engage in group discussions as well as one-on-one conversations with students and graduates.

A notable benefit of Gatherly is the easy inclusion of exhibitors from rural and underserved communities. For example, naturopathic clinics that could not previously attend in-person now have direct access to CCNM students and graduates. Recent exhibitors have hailed from Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and the Northwest Territories.

While many exhibitors attend with hiring goals in mind, others participate to recruit preceptors, promote residency opportunities, share professional insights, and help support the next generation of NDs.

Making the Right Connections

Shortly after convocation and only one month into a post-graduate residency, Dr. Hanieh Vedadi, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2019), attended the Career Expo. It proved to be a pivotal experience, connecting her with Dr. Anthony Gucciardi, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2014), Clinic Director of Mahaya Forest Hill, an integrative clinic in Toronto, Ontario.

That first meeting marked a decisive shift in Dr. Vedadi's career and led to an opportunity to join the clinic as an associate. She remained with Mahaya Forest Hill for five years, crediting the clinic's supportive environment with allowing her to focus on what mattered most to her as a new practitioner: providing excellent naturopathic care to patients.

"My goal was to show up, practise, use my knowledge and skills to help people feel better, and not have to worry about anything else," she says. "Mahaya Forest Hill provided exactly that for me. I never once thought about changing my naturopathic practice. It was a wonderful collaboration and an excellent match."

In that time, Dr. Vedadi's career has continued to expand. In addition to building her private practice, she served in a variety of academic and clinical leadership roles at the College, including part-time clinic faculty, teaching assistant, Faculty Council Chair, and later as the interim Director of Clinical Services for CCNM's pan-Canadian umbrella of

"Our students and graduates are ready to help patients and get involved. They're talented, eager, and excited. They're up-to-date on their clinical knowledge, bring fresh perspectives, and are ready to grow within the profession."

**Dr. Hanieh Vedadi, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2019)**



teaching clinics. In September 2024, she relocated to British Columbia to assume the role of Associate Dean of Clinical Education at the CCNM – Boucher Campus, where she plays an integral part in developing the clinical education curriculum, guides and manages clinic faculty to deliver the highest standards of teaching and care, and supervises fourth-year interns at the onsite Boucher Naturopathic Clinic.

“One of the best things I did after graduation was residency. The other was attending the Career Expo.”

Dr. Hanieh Vedadi, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2019)

She encourages clinic owners to take part in the Career Expo, noting that recent alumni and students on the cusp of graduation are the ideal candidates to strengthen a clinical team.

“Our students and graduates are ready to help patients and get involved,” Dr. Vedadi says. “They’re talented, eager, and excited. They’re up-to-date on their clinical knowledge, bring fresh perspectives, and are ready to grow within the profession.”

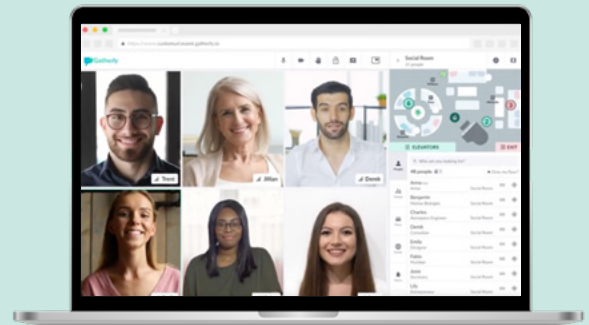
Looking back, Dr. Vedadi considers the Career Expo one of the most valuable professional development opportunities available to students and recent graduates. Her own story demonstrates that a single conversation has the potential to open doors and launch a fulfilling career in naturopathic medicine.

“One of the best things I did after graduation was residency. The other was attending the Career Expo.”

CCNM Career Expo 2026 is delivered online through the Gatherly virtual platform



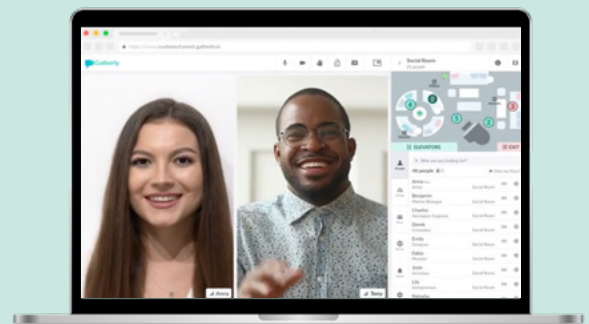
The streamlined experience for participants from both CCNM campuses and allows attendees to join from anywhere in the country.



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A notable benefit of Gatherly is the easy inclusion of exhibitors from rural and underserved communities.



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Virtual event via Gatherly
9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. PT
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Open to fourth-year CCNM students, the Class of 2026 and the Class of 2025

CCNM's Career Expo offers students and recent graduates valuable insights into the diverse professional pathways awaiting them as naturopathic doctors.

They:

- meet with clinic and other business owners interested in setting up externships, engaging students as preceptors, creating residencies, and hiring ND associates
- learn about the varied career opportunities available to them when they graduate
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A Lifetime of Service

Through teaching, mentorship,
and patient care, Dr. Afsoun Khalili, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2003)
has made her mark on CCNM's community



One of CCNM's defining qualities is its sense of connection and community, honed over nearly five decades. Staff, students, and faculty have all helped to shape the College's unique identity, contributing their knowledge and commitment to service that permeates every thread of campus life.

At the College, it is often the smallest interactions that leave imprints over time – the quiet learning moments between teacher and student in a hallway after class, the transfer of practical knowledge from clinician to intern as they care for a patient, or the breakthrough idea that emerges when colleagues work together to solve a problem.

This overarching culture – rooted in the collaborative traditions of naturopathic medicine – is what makes CCNM a meaningful place to study and work.

For Dr. Afsoun Khalili, ND (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2003), who arrived at the College as a first-year naturopathic student in 1999 and has remained in prominent faculty roles ever since, CCNM is special because of these characteristics. She recalls leaving her hometown of Montreal, Quebec, and

moving into the campus residence to begin a career in naturopathic medicine; some 27 years later, Dr. Khalili can't imagine being anywhere else.

"CCNM had just moved into its current location at Leslie Street and Sheppard Avenue," she says. "There was no parking lot yet. Class sizes and the profession itself were smaller, and when I would tell people about naturopathic medicine, they didn't know what it was. But the professors had been NDs for a long time, and they taught in a hands-on way. We made our own creams and salves. There was a warm and welcoming spirit, and we all knew each other."

After graduating from the naturopathic program, Dr. Khalili applied for a residency position at the College. During those two years, she realized how much she enjoyed imparting her knowledge

to a new intake of learners. When CCNM Dean Dr. Nick De Groot, ND (non-clinical), then the Dean of Clinical Education, encouraged her to join the faculty, she agreed to pursue a full-time role.

A Unique Stamp on CCNM

Since then, Dr. Khalili has taught various courses, acted as the faculty representative on CCNM's Board of Governors, and won numerous academic and clinical teaching awards from graduating Toronto Campus students. Currently, as an associate professor, she leads the 100- and 200-level clinic shadowing series and instructs a naturopathic therapeutics course. In addition, she continues to supervise three shifts at the Schad Naturopathic Clinic and accepts student externs at her private practice.

After graduating from the naturopathic program, Dr. Khalili applied for a residency position at the College. During those two years, she realized how much she enjoyed imparting her knowledge to a new intake of learners.



“Whenever I walk into CCNM, it feels like all my best friends are here.”

Dr. Afsoun Khalili, ND
(CCNM – Toronto Class of 2003)

Guided by the six naturopathic principles, as well as the philosophy of “with high tides, all ships rise,” she believes in serving the College community and helping others succeed. For Dr. Khalili, some of the most worthwhile aspects of that service are the relationships she has built with others as a student, educator, clinician, and mentor.

“Whenever I walk into CCNM, it feels like all my best friends are here. I’ve known some of my colleagues for over 20 years now. Every corner of the College holds a memory for me. The students are bright; their energy and inquisitive nature are

inspiring to me. Our patients are special, too. I have some patients whom I’ve seen since I was an intern. They still come to the clinic to receive treatment from me.”

It is these enduring connections that have made CCNM a home for Dr. Khalili. Asked what the College means to her today, her answer is eloquently simple: “CCNM is an incredible place, and it’s a gift to be here.” Through her years of service and the many lives she has touched, Dr. Khalili has helped make the College an incredible place for others as well.

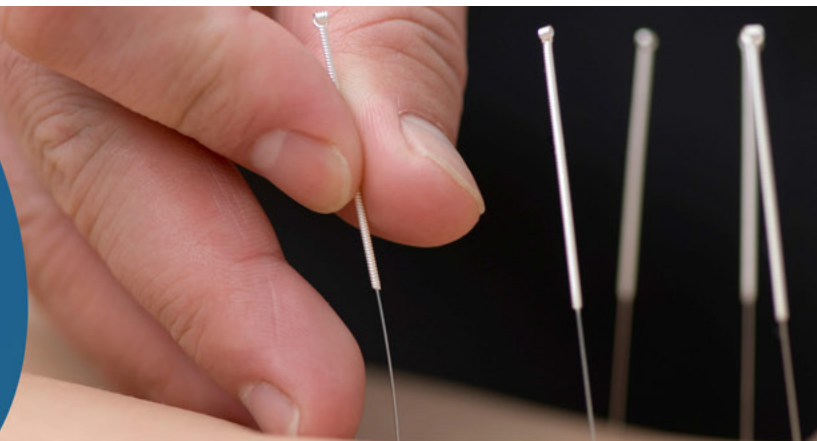


Dr. Afsoun Khalili (CCNM – Toronto Class of 2003) in her various roles to the College: professor, clinic supervisor, Board of Governors member, and multi-year winner of faculty awards as voted by the graduating classes.



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Each spring, CCNM updates its Donor Wall to recognize the individuals and organizations whose generosity helps to advance and support the College's mission of making naturopathic medicine an integral part of health care through pre-eminent education, research, and clinical services.

For many donors, giving is motivated by a deep appreciation for the efficacy of individualized, preventive care and a desire to give back. Their support helps fund priorities across the College, including research initiatives, academic delivery, student services, clinical programs, and the CCNM Patterson Institute for Integrative Oncology Research. Donors also represent varied backgrounds, from alumni and grateful patients to sponsors and corporate partners. Some even choose to make a lasting impact by including CCNM in their estate plans and legacy giving.

The Donor Wall is divided into five buckets, each representing a distinct yet equal level of support:

Strong Historical Support

The first is Strong Historical Support. These are the ones who stood with us from the beginning and planted the roots of CCNM. Their early faith in the College during our formative years helped us find our footing and grow with confidence into a pan-Canadian, multi-campus institution.

Legacy Gifts

The next is Legacy Gifts. These donors have chosen to leave a lasting impact through planned giving. Their foresight ensures that future generations of students and naturopathic doctors will continue to benefit from a strong and sustainable institution.

Turning Point Campaign

In 2016, CCNM boldly stated that it will "transform health care and transform lives" in the areas of research, education, collaboration, and connection. The five-year Turning Point campaign was a seminal effort proving just that. With support from leading industry partners and private donors, the College furthered its commitment to drive the profession forward by launching a swath of innovative, future-oriented initiatives.

Corporate Supporters

Corporate Supporters are the businesses and organizations that have collaborated with us over the years. Their support has helped us expand our reach, enhance our naturopathic medical program, deliver high-quality clinical services through gifts-in-kind, and innovate in ways that serve our students, patients, and communities.

Individual Supporters

The fifth and final section is our Individual Supporters. These are the alumni, faculty, staff, community members, and friends who have given from the heart. Their contributions reflect a personal connection to CCNM's mission, vision, and ends, and a shared belief in the healing power of naturopathic medicine.

The Donor Wall also highlights the essential role alumni play in bolstering the profession at its most fundamental level. Many graduates direct their support toward scholarships and bursaries, ensuring that current students facing financial challenges can pursue naturopathic medical education without worry.

From classes held at the West Coast College of Massage Therapy, the historic Begbie Courthouse, and eventually, the CCNM – Boucher Campus on Columbia Street, to the Inn on the Park, a converted Kitchener tabernacle, an elementary school, two floors of a midtown high-rise, and finally the CCNM – Toronto Campus, countless donors have contributed to the College's growth and continued evolution as the premier institute for naturopathic medical education in Canada. In this way, the Donor Wall is a glimpse into our still-ongoing story. It reminds us of our progress and, most importantly, acknowledges the supporters who have shaped the institution for almost 50 years.

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The Donor Wall is a glimpse into our still-ongoing story. It reminds us of our progress and, most importantly, acknowledges the supporters who have shaped the institution for almost 50 years.



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Managing Editor, *Mind | Body | Spirit*



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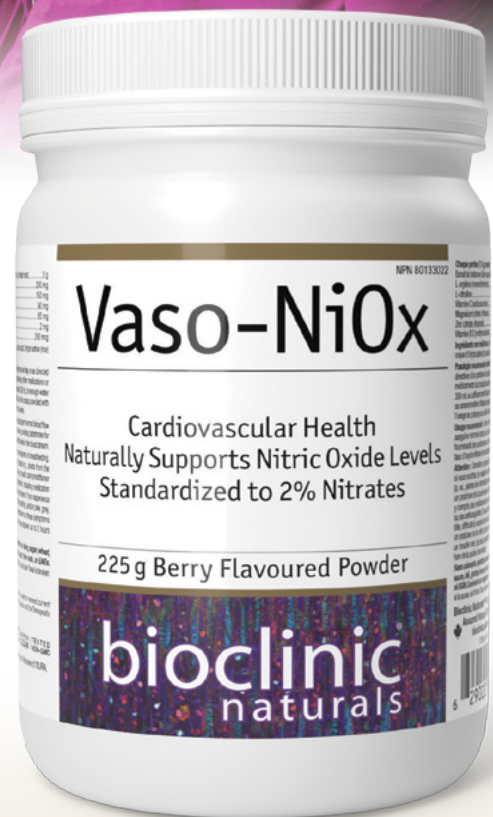


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