

Delhi-born Sikh nurse is Canada's new health minister

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NEW DELHI-BORN Kamal Khera has been appointed Canada's health minister, making her the only India-born member of Prime Minister Mark Carney's newly sworn-in Cabinet. A registered nurse and long-time Liberal politician, Khera represents Brampton West and has served in various key roles since her first election in 2015.

Khera takes over the health portfolio after previously serving as minister of diversity, inclusion and persons with disabilities. She has also held the positions of minister of seniors and parliamentary secretary in multiple ministries, including health, national revenue, and international development. Her appointment comes as Carney forms his first cabinet following Justin Trudeau's resignation, with the new government comprising 24 ministers—13 men and 11 women—as compared to 37 in the previous Trudeau ministry.

Khera was born on February 4, 1989, in New Delhi. Her father Harminder Singh, who passed away in 2020, served in the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), while her mother, Gursharan Kaur, was a teacher. Her elder brother Mani Singh is a mortgage specialist at Bank of Montreal.

Her family moved to Canada when she was 10 years old. There she went on to pursue a career in healthcare. She completed an Honours Bachelor of Science in Nursing from York University before working as a registered nurse in the palliative and oncology units at St Joseph's Health Centre in Toronto. Her background in healthcare shaped her political journey, with a focus on social welfare and public health policies.



Kamal Khera

During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, Khera returned to her medical roots, volunteering at a hard-hit long-term care facility in Brampton and later administering vaccines in the community. "As a nurse, my top priority is to always be there to support my patients, and that's the same mentality I'll bring every day to the role of minister of health," she said. "Extremely grateful for the confidence of PM @MarkJCarney. Now, it's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work."

Khera visited Ludhiana in 2015 for her brother's wedding, shortly after being elected as the Member of Parliament for Brampton West at the age of 26. During her visit, she spoke about the differences between politics in India and Canada, noting the heavy security surrounding Indian politicians. "We move around like ordinary citizens," she said.

Her ancestral village of Bhagomajra near Mohali celebrated her re-election to Parliament in 2021. Villagers recalled her visit the previous December, when she connected with her community. With her appointment, Khera joins fellow Indian-origin minister Anita Anand in the new cabinet. Anand, born in Nova Scotia to a Tamil father and a Punjabi mother, has been named minister of innovation, science, and industry.