Arisha Khan

Tammy Chen Memorial Scholarship 2026 – 2027



Programme: DPhil, Primary Health Care, University of Oxford

Biography (IN ENGLISH): Arisha Khan grew up in the child welfare system in Ontario. Her career follows from that experience in a fairly direct way as she has spent it trying to bridge lived experience with evidence to create more human-centred systems for vulnerable people.

At 18, Khan became one of the youngest board members ever appointed to a Children's Aid Society in Ontario. That work led to a three-year appointment as a Public Appointee advising the Premier of Ontario, Cabinet and provincial Ministries. She ran community consultations across the province, visited youths in detention facilities, and helped design hundreds of millions of dollars in youth funding programmes, including a major transformation of Ontario's child and youth mental health system. She later served as Vice-President of Youth in Care Canada and led a legislative review of the Child and Family Services Act, testifying before the provincial legislature on its reform. She has also worked on migrant worker protection policy for the Federal government.

She has completed a BA (Hons) in Comparative Health and Social Policy at McGill University. A report she wrote while there on support programming for students from foster care led to a permanently endowed bursary for youth entering university from care.

That interest in policy development has carried through into Arisha's research as a DPhil candidate at the University of Oxford's Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, based at Green Templeton College. Her thesis is about social prescribing—the practice of connecting patients to non-clinical community supports like social groups, arts programmes and peer networks, comparing England's centralised NHS-led model with Canada's fragmented, provincially-driven one. Underneath this sits a bigger question that she's always been drawn to: how do policy ideas move from one country to another, and what conditions need to be met for the successful translation of policy innovation? Research on social prescribing is, for her, a case study of that larger problem of policy adoption across different systems. She is drawing on a systematic review, interviews with physicians and non-physician providers, including community paramedics, nurses and pharmacists across Canada, and an analysis of policy documents from both countries.

She plans to bring the research home to Canada where her career has moved between research and implementation for a long time - through child welfare reform, mental health system transformation, and health and social policy.

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