

Nâtawihowin–healing medicine: Creating an inclusive and restorative College complaint process for Indigenous Peoples with Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons

Dr. James Makokis, Nehiyô (Saddle Lake Cree Nation), Treaty No. 6
Associate Clinical Professor, Dept of Family Medicine – University of Alberta
Adjunct Faculty, Dalla Lana School of Public Health – University of Toronto

Presentation to:
Chiefs of Ontario Health Summit
Niskipisim Niso (March 2), 2023

Acknowledgements

- Dr. Jean Langley MD CCFP FCFP – former Physician Investigator at College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta
- Priscilla McGilvery, MA, University nuxethot'ine thaa?ehots'j nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills (Saddle Lake Cree Nation)
- Leo McGilvery, Indigenous Knowledge Holder (Saddle Lake Cree Nation)



Our objectives

1. Share the Talking Circle Interview Process as a Restorative Based Solution/Trauma Informed Care to addressing Indigenous patient complaints
2. Present our reasons for change
3. Discuss the “before” and “now”
4. Share our learnings and vision going forward
5. How can the Chiefs of Ontario help with this work?

Who brought us here?

- 37-year-old Joyce Echaquan (Atikamekw), who filmed her death on social media at a Quebec hospital
- “This has to stop!”



Context – Grass Roots Indigenous Physicians Group: Met weekly during the Pandemic

Doctors:

- 1) Lana Potts (Blackfoot)
- 2) Veronica Mckinney (Cree-Metis)
- 3) Lisa Kinew (Anishinaabe)
- 4) Sabina Ijaz (Pakistani, Ally)
- 5) Marlyn Cook (Cree)
- 6) Ojistoh Horn (Mohawk)
- 7) Karen Hill (Mohawk)
- 8) James Makokis (Cree)

Who brought us here?

- 37-year-old Joyce Echaquan (Atikamekw), who filmed her death on social media at a Quebec hospital
- Sparked national dialogues on Anti-Indigenous racism in the healthcare system
 - FMRAC National Anti-Indigenous Racism Committee
 - FMRAC National Anti-Indigenous Racism Conference, June 2022 (Quebec City)
 - P/T Colleges Indigenous Health Councils



Racism is a Violation of our Treaties. Racism Kills.



Methods of Launching Complaints within the Health Care system

- Regulatory Bodies: One of most effective as it targets peoples' licenses to practice their profession.
 - College of Physicians and Surgeons
 - Colleges of Nursing
 - Colleges of Pharmacy
 - College of EMT's
 - Etc.
- Within the Provincial Health System:
 - Hospital
 - Health Authority
- Each interaction that the patient has, requires a different complaint process and can be OVERWHELMING.

Our reasons for change:

Why was it important for Regulator Colleges to modify the investigation process for Indigenous patients?

- Past and present Indigenous health experiences
 - Feeling that submitting complaint is:
 - Hopeless, overwhelming, confrontational, justice is not achieved, and “nothing is done anyway”
 - The process is retraumatizing to patients and their families
- “We don’t receive complaints from Indigenous Peoples.” – WHY?
 - **(Often there is no indicator to identify Indigeneity in complaints process)**
- Investigator experience

The Before and Now:

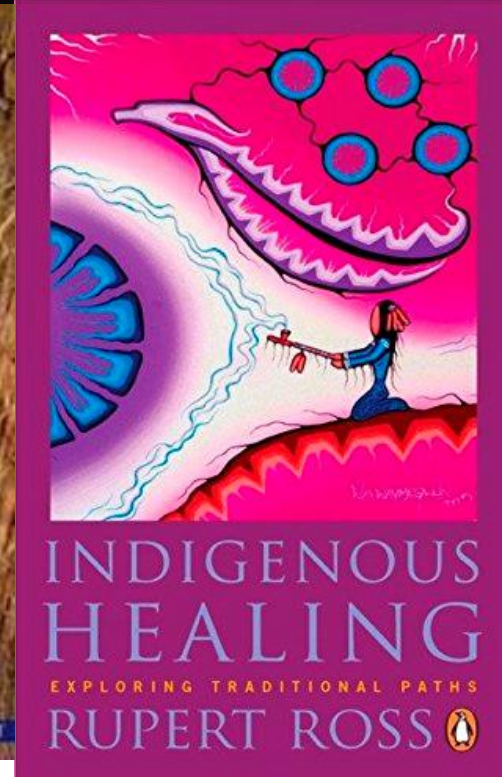
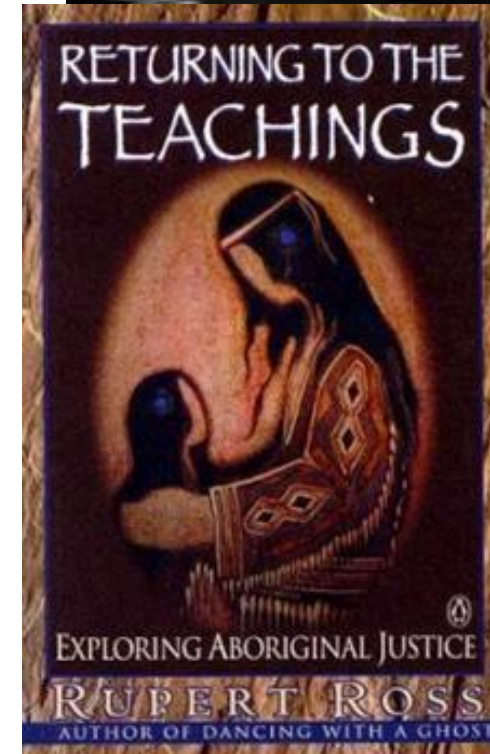
- Before: Usual complaint investigation process
- Now: The new process
- Talking Circle

Usual investigation process

- Investigator performs investigation solo, or with help of a community physician, +/- expert
- The respondent physician provides a response
- Investigator gathers further information, such as patient records
- Investigator interviews complainant: phone, videoconference, in-person
- Investigator interviews respondent physician
- Investigator writes the investigation report and presents to CD

Now: Our new process

- Identifying Indigenous Patients
 - Consideration of including Indigenous identifiers on complaint submission form (you can't identify racism without looking for it)
 - Explanation of alternative process provided within form. Patients are given the option of the "usual" vs "new" process
 - This helps restore patient autonomy and empowerment.
- Involving an Indigenous physician, to help "identify racism" and provide a peer opinion
- Involving Talking Circle Trauma Informed Facilitator (Priscilla) and Elder (Leo) to facilitate process. Based on Restorative Justice Principles from the legal system
- Interviews of other healthcare providers to understand/uncover covert racism and bias
- Investigator Experience of working with Indigenous physician



November 2022

- Cree women from Northern Alberta presents to OB (1st)
- Sends to Hospital
- Told she is not expected (2nd)
- After hours, admitted, sees Residents (3rd)
- Is on L/D floor (4th)
- Her OB sees her (5th)
- She starts delivering (6th), RN watches, does not help.
- She lays for hours before another RN brings her baby back and asks if she wants to take home "specimen." (7th)
- **Interactions: CPSA, CARNA, Covenant Health, AHS, Workers Union (MOA)**

Edmonton

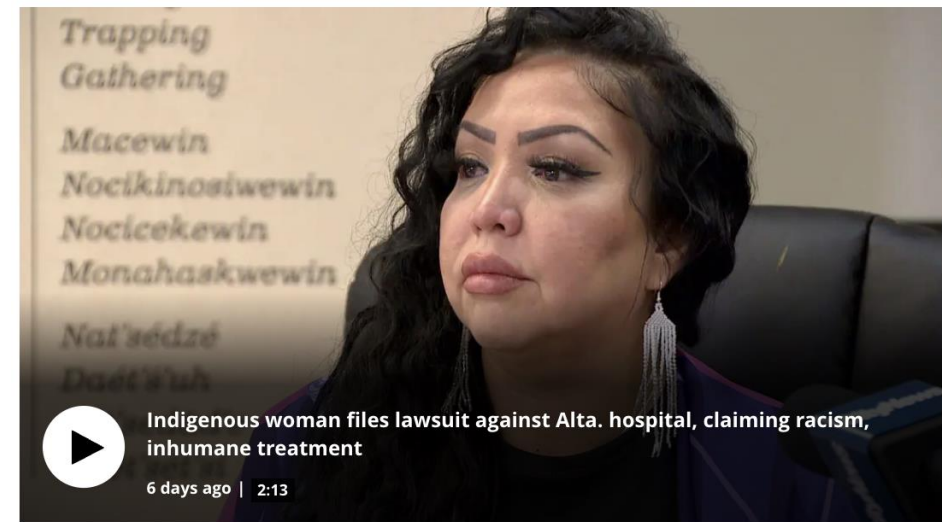
Cree woman alleges racial discrimination in death of newborn daughter at Edmonton hospital



Treaty 8 Grand Chief Arthur Noskey calls for provincial inquiry



Paige Parsons · CBC News · Posted: Nov 03, 2022 6:24 PM MT | Last Updated: November 3



An Indigenous woman in Alberta is suing an Edmonton hospital and a doctor after allegedly failing to receive help during a harrowing premature delivery.

WARNING: This article describes the death of an infant in a health-care setting.

A Bigstone Cree Nation woman is alleging that both she and her now-deceased daughter were treated inhumanely while she was giving birth in an Edmonton hospital in June 2020.

Pearl Gambler alleges that she was mistreated at the Misericordia Community Hospital, including being left alone to give birth, delays in treatment, and that a hospital staff member referred to her dead infant daughter as "a specimen."

CHANGE! Principles

- Acknowledge that racism exists within the healthcare system (past and present) and is a cause for morbidity and mortality of Indigenous Peoples
- Racism is violence
- Racism is hate and is a violation of Indigenous Laws
- Racism disempowers patients and families and requires a trauma-informed restorative approach
 - Patient's support person and/or Elder is invited to participate

Edmonton

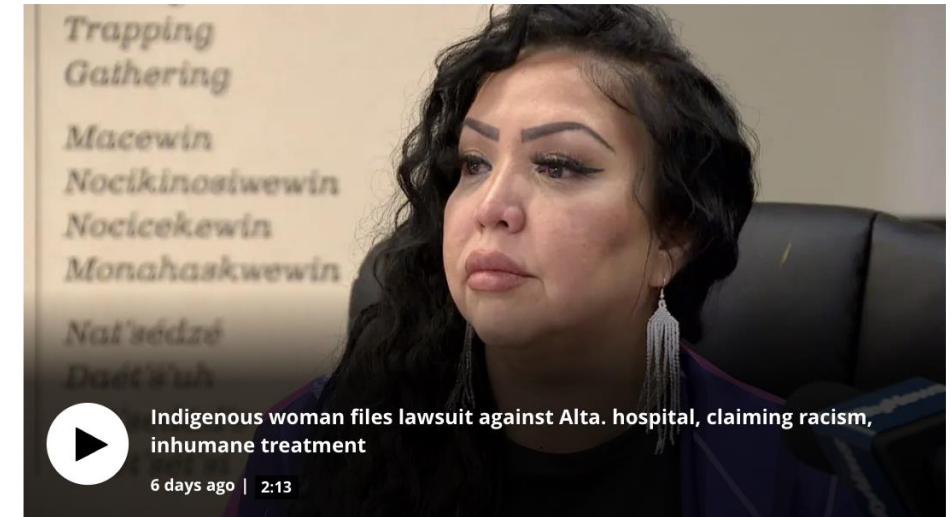
Cree woman alleges racial discrimination in death of newborn daughter at Edmonton hospital



Treaty 8 Grand Chief Arthur Noskey calls for provincial inquiry



Paige Parsons · CBC News · Posted: Nov 03, 2022 6:24 PM MT | Last Updated: November 3



An Indigenous woman in Alberta is suing an Edmonton hospital and a doctor after allegedly failing to receive help during a harrowing premature delivery.

WARNING: This article describes the death of an infant in a health-care setting.

A Bigstone Cree Nation woman is alleging that both she and her now-deceased daughter were treated inhumanely while she was giving birth in an Edmonton hospital in June 2020.

Pearl Gambler alleges that she was mistreated at the Misericordia Community Hospital, including being left alone to give birth, delays in treatment, and that a hospital staff member referred to her dead infant daughter as "a specimen."



Significant Violations of *Nehiyaw Wiyasiwewina* (Cree Laws)

- *Pastahowin* – the breaking of a physical law against another human being (ie. Abuse, murder, physical coercion, etc.)
- *Pastamowin* – the breaking of a verbal law against another human being (i.e. Profanity, gossiping, boasting, etc.)
- *Ohcinewin* – the breaking of a physical law against anything other than a human being (i.e. torturing animals, polluting the environment, over harvesting resources, etc.)
- *Ohcinemowin* – the breaking of a verbal law against anything other than a human being (i.e. boasting about hunting and killing animals, using profanity against Creation, not using prayer to harvest resources, etc.)

Source: Sylvia McAdam (2015). Nationhood Interrupted: Revitalizing nêhiyaw Legal Systems.

Talking Circle

- Violation of *Nehiyaw wiyasiwewina* (Cree Laws) requires restoration of balance.
- Principles of Talking Circle:
 - Everyone has an equal voice
 - One person speaks at a time, everyone else listens
 - Respect (*kistêyihtamowin*) is essential
 - Everyone participates (people can pass if needed)
- **In future, this would involve having the physician who has been shown to have harmed the patient, listen to how they have harmed the patient and their family (Restoration process)**



Talking Circle Outline

- Welcome - Priscilla
- Prayer, smudge, song, drumming – Leo
- Opening Remarks - Priscilla explains process
- Introductions
 - James – describes new process
 - Jean (previously worked at CPSA as physician investigator) – describes usual process
- Complainant/Patient invited to share story – Priscilla
- James/Jean invited to ask clarifying questions – Priscilla
- Closing Circle – Priscilla, and next steps - Jean
- Closing prayer







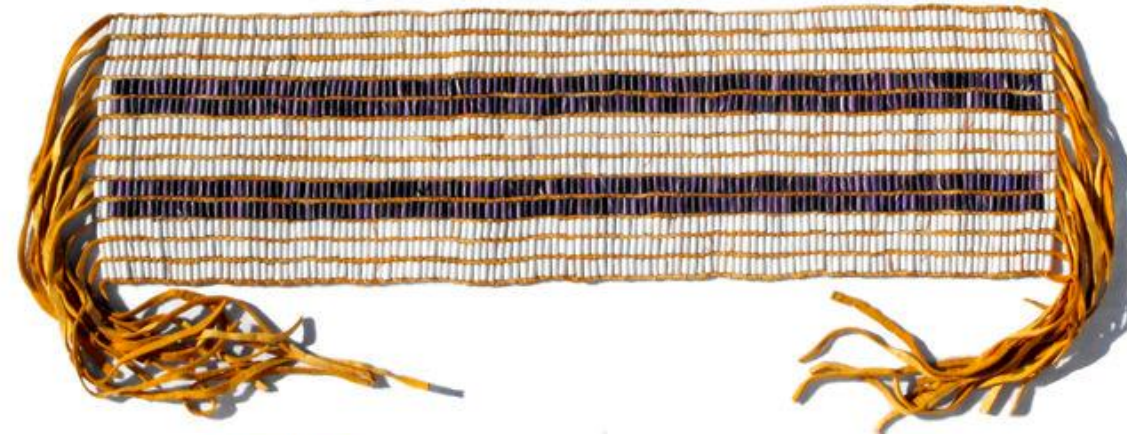
What we need to continue doing this work

Political support to ensure this work continues and is not abandoned.

?Chiefs of Ontario Resolution supporting this work to address anti-Indigenous Racism utilizing Indigenous Trauma-informed Methods.

Moving Forward – And Other Areas of Consideration

- Continuing to completion: Bringing together the complainant and physician (Restorative Process; Healing).
- Standards/Statements on Indigenous Medicine/Healing
 - Honour the Two Row Wampum and our Treaties where medicines are to be practiced together.
- Transferability on Physician Licensing for Indigenous Communities to improve access to Services, across Treaty Territories.
 - Recognizing Indigenous Sovereignty
 - Akwesasne (Dr. Ojistoh Horne)



CALGARY HERALD

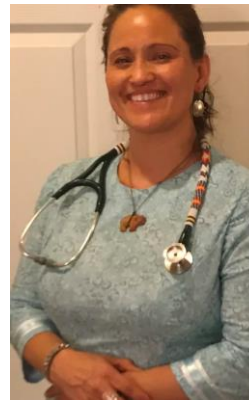
'VaxxFest' encourages Indigenous youth to get their COVID-19 jabs

"We're aiming for 100 per cent immunization amongst our people, so that we're here in 100 years," said Dr. James Makokis.

Jason Herring
Sep 25, 2021 • 3 days ago • 3 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)



Social media influencer Kendra Jessie received her first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine with Dr. James Makokis at the VaxxFest event at the Grey Eagle Casino on Saturday, September 25, 2021. VaxxFest is a festival-style event which will encourage Indigenous youth to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Gavin Young/Postmedia

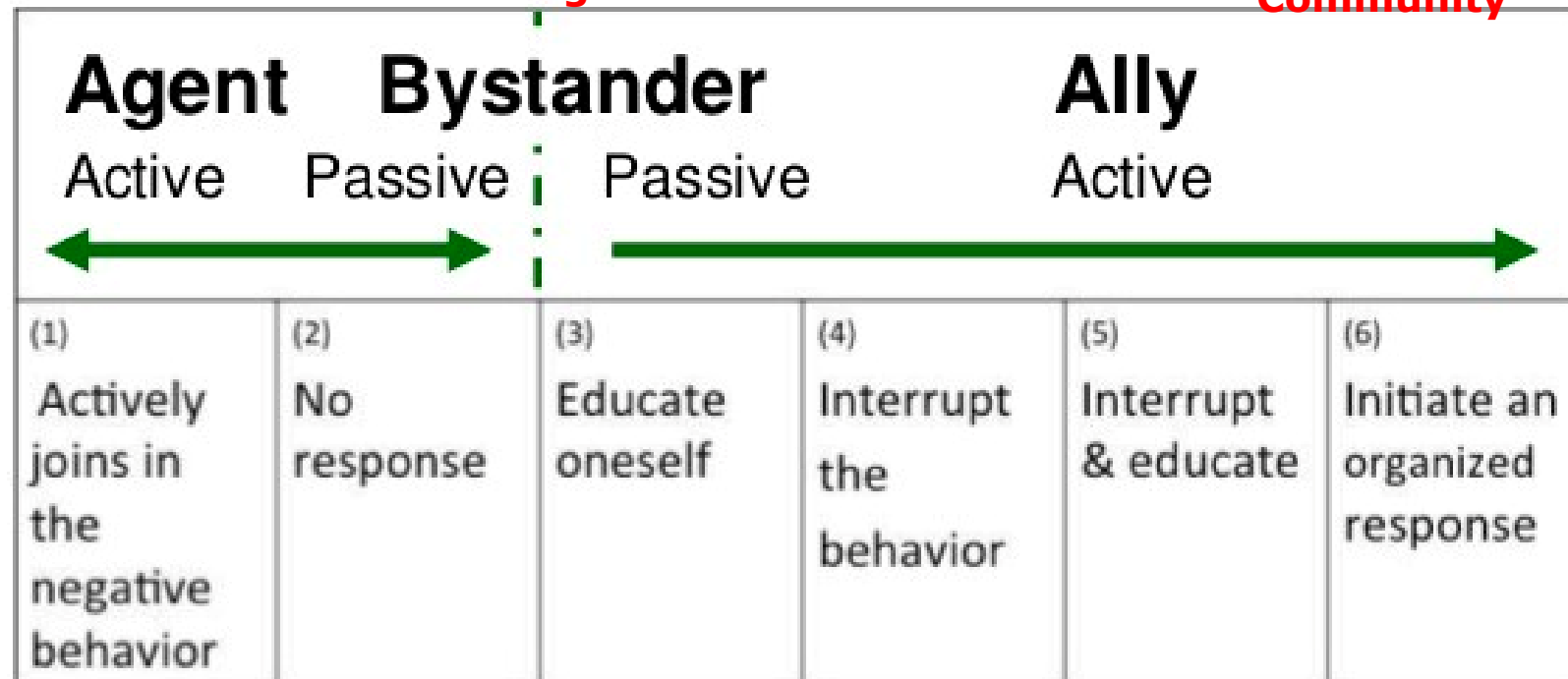


No Institutional
action promotes
the behaviours of
Agents, Passive
Bystanders

Bystander to Ally

Putting out
Statements
against Racism

Acting on
Statements.
Creating
inclusive
respectful
processes with
Community



Karen Bradberry, PhD

Ayihây – Thank you
Questions?

James.Makokis@gmail.com