



Waniska! Wake up: a command, a call to action, a name

Waniska is an Indigenous-led centre for research on HIV, Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) and other sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBI) focused on Saskatchewan (SK) and Manitoba (MB). Waniska is a command used in the Cree and Saulteaux languages, which means wake up, or arise. It is a concept filled with optimism for the new day, which we greet with renewed energy and passion. It is a verb, reflecting that as Indigenous people, our knowledge is action oriented.

The word waniska describes the Saskatchewan Health Authority Patient/Family Advisory Committee for HIV/AIDS and is a tribute to people with lived experience of HIV. To carry on this tradition, waniska is the name gifted to the Indigenous SK/MB Centre for HIV/HCV/STBBI Research. The research team includes members based in SK and MB and is comprised of people from various backgrounds and cultures.

The waniska Centre will develop partnerships with communities and community-based organizations that will help tackle HIV/HCV/STBBI inequities using a Two-eyed Seeing approach. Two-eyed Seeing brings together Indigenous and Western world views or forms of knowledge; we privilege Indigenous ways and interweave relevant Western ways and ensure that the best practices from both cultures are employed.

Both organizations, All Nations Hope Network (SK) and Ka Ni Kanichihk (MB), have hired or are hiring a Community Coordinator to assist with developing grassroots research agendas, help with sharing circles and ceremonies, and build research partnerships.

We have also partnered with the Ongomiizwin Institution, University of Manitoba. They will hire a Research Coordinator to supervise community-based and located research with research partners.

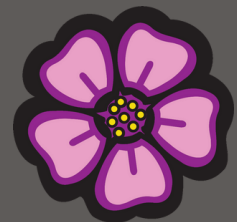
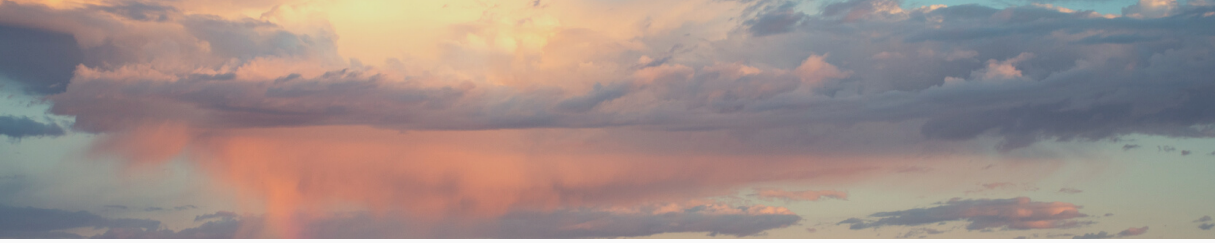
Jobs available

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

The waniska Indigenous Centre for HIV, HCV and STBBI is seeking applications for a three-year Postdoctoral Fellowship (PDF) in land- and culture-based Indigenous healing and wellness.

The fellow will undertake independent research on land-based research for Indigenous health and wellness as it relates to HIV, HCV and STBBI and other related comorbidities.

That posting, and other future waniska opportunities, can be found at waniskacentre.ca/jobs



Waniska launches later this month!

The launch of the waniska Centre is set for June 21, 2021, at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, 11:00 a.m. CST. It will feature ceremonialists, performers and speakers from First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures in SK and MB. Jen Quesnel, a Saskatoon-based Métis journalist, will emcee. Register at <https://5by5.ca/waniska>.

HONOURING PARTNERSHIPS VIRTUALLY



Photo submitted by Albert McLeod

Two virtual pipe ceremonies were held to honour research partnerships the waniska Centre has established with the All Nations Hope Network in Regina and Ka Ni Kanichihk in Winnipeg. The ceremony with All Nations Hope Network took place on April 6. The ceremony with Ka Ni Kanichihk took place on April 13.

The ceremonies sought ancestral guidance for waniska to innovate new approaches to undertaking community-led and Indigenous-resonant ethical health research. For waniska, this includes policies and practices that honour Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing informing and incorporated into research processes and practices.

The pipe ceremonies are a recognition of the research relationship and the promise to approach agreements, initiatives and projects in an open, honest, collaborative and overall good way. Read more here: <https://waniskacentre.ca/news-events/waniska-centre-pipe-ceremonies/>

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

One of our aims is to provide networking opportunities and learn from organizations on their programs, projects and initiatives.

Please let us know about your programs, projects and initiatives so that we can learn and share these wise practices with other organizations.

Contact us

www.waniskacentre.ca/contact

info@waniskacentre.ca

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Research Updates

Manitoba Stories

Meghana Cheekireddy is a Master of Public Health student working with pewaseskwan, the Indigenous Wellness Research Group in Saskatoon. Along with our partners in MB, and Chad Hammond, Project Coordinator of Sask Stories, she will work on an environmental scan and annotated bibliography of published literature on community-based approaches for HIV/HCV/STBBI for MB.

CanHepC Roadmaps

Alexandra King, along with Renée Mashing and Carrielynn Lund, will lead the development of both the Indigenous National and Prairie Region Roadmaps, respectively. These will build on the momentum of the national Blueprint to inform Hepatitis C elimination efforts in Canada with regional focuses to attain consensus on priority recommendations for the elimination of Hepatitis C and planning efforts.


Innovative Partnerships

Waniska has worked, and will continue to work, to connect community organizations to USask to access resources they might not otherwise receive (e.g., library access, assistance with grant development and implementation, data storage, etc.). Waniska is currently working with the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) as a “pilot” organization for this initiative. We are working with the Office of the Vice President Research, USask to prioritize this initiative and elicit additional supports.

Insti-test, Dried Blood Spots for Confirmatory Testing for HIV/Comorbidities

A new partnership has been established with Dr. Barry Lavallee to pilot population-based testing using rapid screening HIV tests along with confirmatory testing possibilities. This project is in development and more information will be available soon.





Principal Investigator/Knowledge User Team

Alexandra King, Chair, Cameco Chair in Indigenous Health and Wellness, USask

Michelle Johnson-Jennings, USask

Malcolm King, USask

Josee Lavoie, UofM

Linda Larcombe, UofM

Albert McLeod, Two-Spirit People Manitoba

Mike Payne, Nine Circles Community Health Centre

Margaret Kîsikâw Piyêsîs, All Nations Hope Network, CAAN

Jaqueline Flett, Sisters of Fire

John Kim, Public Health Agency of Canada

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Brenda Elias, UofM

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Research Team

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Harvey Thunderchild, Project Officer, USask

Kehinde Ametepee, Project Officer, USask

Taiwo Ametepee, Research Associate, USask, waniska evaluation

Dallas Montpetit, Community Coordinator for All Nations Hope Network

"As the Saskatchewan Community Coordinator, my job is to support the waniska Indigenous Centre on HIV/HCV/STBBI Inequities by helping with the development of programs and implementation of Indigenous-led community engagement initiatives within urban, rural and remote areas in Saskatchewan."

-- Dallas Montpetit

Community Coordinator, All Nations Hope Network