



WANISKA NEWSLETTER | SEPTEMBER 2022

WANISKA'S BUSY SUMMER

The Waniska Centre was busy throughout the summer. Team members attended a number of conferences and other events, sharing the work we do and leading workshops. Recruitment for new research projects is underway and more grants are being written. We're really happy to share what our team has been up to and hope you enjoy our latest updates.

WANISKA AT CONFERENCES





CAAN Wise Practices & Skills Building Gathering, May 17 – 19, 2022 (Winnipeg, MB)

Leaders and management of the Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research and the Waniska Indigenous Centre hosted a session at the CAAN Wise Practices & Skills Building Gathering in Winnipeg, MB, on May 18 – 20, 2022. Feast and Waniska hosted an interactive arts-based session with Dr. Robert Henry, Assistant Professor in the faculty of Indigenous Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. Henry gave a presentation on how to effectively do arts-based research. Rebecca Murdoch, a Treaty 1, Winnipeg local and beading expert, taught participants how to bead strawberries; it was the time of the Strawberry Moon, so these lovely berries were the perfect choice.

World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Viral Hepatitis (WIPCVH) Pre-Conference Workshop, June 22, 2022 (Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, Saskatoon, SK)

The World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Viral Hepatitis (WIPCVH) Pre-Conference held on June 22, 2022 was a success. Community members from SK joined Waniska and [CATIE](#) at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel to share lived and living experiences with hepatitis C (HCV) and to learn about dried blood spot (DBS) self-testing with the National Laboratory, represented by Christine Mesa and John Kim.

9th International Indigenous Pre-Conference on HIV and AIDS, July 27 – 28, 2022 (Montreal, QC) & 24th International AIDS Conference 2022 July 29 – Aug. 2, 2022 (Montreal, QC)

Jaida Beaudin, Waniska's grant coordinator, presented on the CIHR-funded project Atohtitam ~ Becoming of Age: Inspiring Healthy Sexuality and Wellness through "Identity Healing" to Prevent, Reduce and Eliminate HIV/HCV/STBBI Inequities among Indigenous Youth in Saskatchewan. In addition, other members of the Waniska team attended the AIDS conference and the AIDS 2022 Global Village. Saydi Harlton and Renée Mashing (CAAN) also facilitated a beading workshop at the Indigenous People's pavilion at the Global Village.

"This is how us aunties and grannies would get to connect with one another. Through sitting down and beading together as the children played. It built community."

-Beading Participant

"I am a 60' scoop survivor and this is the first time I have ever been able to bead and connect in this way with my culture."

-Beading Participant

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

The Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine (CSAM-SMCA) Annual Scientific Conference, Nov. 2 – 5, 2022

[The Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine \(CSAM-SMCA\) Annual Scientific Conference](#) brings Canada's addiction medicine community together to share ideas and guidance on best practices. The International Network on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users (INHSU) is hosting a symposium in Saskatoon on Nov. 2, in part to develop a community of practice. Waniska is assisting with the development of this community of practice with recruitment efforts geared towards Indigenous people with lived/living experience of HCV, who are on the front-lines and those who have experience in the prison system.

[CSAM-SMCA 2022 Scientific Conference](#)

Manitoba Harm Reduction Network Conference, Nov. 15 – 17, 2022

The Manitoba Harm Reduction Network (MHRN) is hosting the 2022 Manitoba Harm Reduction Conference in Winnipeg, MB. The three-day conference will feature speakers from throughout Manitoba, Canada and the United States. The conference will focus on Indigenous knowledge, anti-oppression and the root causes of harms related to substance use. Waniska team members Saydi Harlton, Melissa Morris and Alex Smith will attend.

[2022 Conference — MHRN](#)

EVENTS & CEREMONIES





Waniska Participated in Naloxone Training at Prairie Harm Reduction for International Overdose Awareness Day, Aug. 30, 2022

The Waniska team participated in naloxone training at [Prairie Harm Reduction](#) in Saskatoon on Aug. 30, 2022. It was a great educational opportunity for the team, especially those working in community collecting dried blood or saliva samples to test for HCV as part of the Nânâtawihisowin project on self-testing acceptability with Indigenous people in Saskatoon that is currently underway.

Waniska Centre at the USask's Welcome Week from Sept. 6 – 9, 2022

From Sept. 6 – 9, the Waniska team participated in USask's Welcome Week. The team created educational pamphlets, Waniska Centre stickers and condoms to distribute to the USask student body. This event provided the team the opportunity to raise awareness about the Waniska Centre's work and about STBBIs in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Welcome Week was also an opportunity to promote the organization to new and returning USask students, sharing information about who we are, what we do and why it is important.

Waniska Centre will Participate in the 2022 AIDS Walk on Sept. 25, 2022

The Waniska team will be joining the 2022 AIDS Walk in Saskatoon on Sept. 25, 2022. We've surpassed our fundraising goal \$1000.00 in donations and will use the opportunity to build bridges between the Waniska Centre and other community organizations that are aligned with our work.

Waniska is Heading to Manitoba for a Retreat at Grey Buffalo Healing Lodge, Oct. 5 – 7, 2022

The Waniska Manitoba retreat will take place October 5 – 7 at Grey Buffalo Healing Lodge in Victoria Bay, MB. The Nîs-ôhtêwak members, the Guiding Oversight Council and Waniska staff and students will attend. We will start the conference off in ceremony and discuss goals for the future and continued development of the Centre.

Research Updates

Atohtitam ~ Becoming of Age: Inspiring Healthy Sexuality and Wellness through "Identity Healing" to Prevent, Reduce and Eliminate HIV/HCV/STBBI Inequities among Indigenous Youth in Saskatchewan

This greatly anticipated project, [Atohtitam](#), led by Dr. Amanda Froehlich Chow, was awarded CIHR funding and is now underway. The project aims to develop a culturally safe and inclusive program to support Indigenous youth in Saskatchewan in their cultural and gender identities, as well as supporting self-care and harm reduction in disease transmission and improving sexual health.

Dr. Froehlich Chow has hired a research coordinator and the team is in the process of securing a community project coordinator and cultural liaison. They have submitted an ethics application which is currently under review. Their next steps will be to plan an opening ceremony for the team and community partners and to establish a Community Guiding Circle. We look forward to replicating this project in other regions.

CanHepC National Indigenous Roadmap

The Waniska Centre is the lead organization for the [National Indigenous Roadmap and the Prairie Region Roadmap](#), which includes Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

The National Indigenous Roadmap core team has met and connected with both the Ontario and Quebec roadmap teams, and are currently recruiting for the CanHepC Indigenous Platform Coordinator who will assist with this project. The National Indigenous Roadmap team, co-led by Dr. Alexandra King and Renée Masching, will create a Medicine Basket to inform the approach for the implementation of strategies with Indigenous people in Canada with HCV. This project has been brought in-house and is therefore being coordinated by Waniska and CAAN. The project is funded by the CanHepC Network.

Other regions include British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, an Atlantic region (New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island), and a Northern region (Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon).

<https://waniskacentre.ca/news-events/canhepc-prairie-roadmap-sharing-circles/>

CanHepC Prairie Region Roadmap

The Prairie Roadmap team has been working to develop a plan for the implementation of strategies for the elimination of HCV as a public health threat and the care of people with the virus. Dr. Alexandra King and Carrielynn Lund co-lead this Roadmap. We have also been joined by Taylor Bassingthwaite (TB) Consulting Group and seek guidance from the Advisory Committee.

Data collection by means of sharing circles and interviews has begun and Waniska is actively recruiting in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. To date, the Prairie Roadmap team has completed two sharing circles with people with lived and living experience of hepatitis C and is recruiting more participants for knowledge sharing and data collection. October dates for Alberta sharing circles and consultative sessions have been confirmed.

<https://waniskacentre.ca/news-events/canhepc-prairie-roadmap-sharing-circles/>

Feast Community Fellowship Grant

A proposal to the Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research for a Community Fellowship Grant, led by Dr. John Schellenberg (University of Manitoba) in partnership with Ka Ni Kanichihk, Sunshine House and Waniska was successful! They will be using these funds towards professional development opportunities for Melissa Morries (Ka Ni Kanichihk) along with a project entitled: ***Manaacii wiithagapin (harm reduction in Cree and Ojibwe): Understanding the acceptability of self-testing for Indigenous people in Manitoba***. This project will look at Indigenous acceptability of self-testing/sampling via Elder-led sharing circles. Along with Elders and Knowledge Holders, Ka Ni Kanichihk will oversee the project to ensure it follows Indigenous protocols. Ethics amendments are completed and sharing circles and self-tests will take place in October and November.

Gigii-bapiimin: Exploring Resilience and the Impacts of COVID-19 on the Health and Wellbeing of Indigenous People Living with HIV/AIDS in Manitoba and Saskatchewan

Rusty Souleymanov (NPI) will lead this CIHR-funded project that focuses on the experiences of Indigenous people in Saskatchewan and Manitoba living with HIV/AIDS during the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced health inequities among this population. Gigii-bapiimin is an Ojibwe term that reflects survival, resilience and overcoming adversity, translating to “we survived.” It is a community-based participatory research study grounded in an Indigenous ethical space, and using etuaptmumk (Two-eyed Seeing), which will interweave Indigenous and Western ways of knowing, being

and doing using a systems approach, to respond to current and pressing knowledge gaps about the impacts of the pandemic on the health and wellness of Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS.

On May 18, 2022, Waniska representatives attended the opening feast and get together for Gijii-bapiimin. As well, ethics approval has been received, and the research team will be meeting on Oct. 4 in Winnipeg. The team's work moves forward as they continue to engage community and work with community guiding circles in both provinces.

Nânâtawihisowin

“To bring about wellness for yourself”

Taiwo Ametepee's practicum on self-testing acceptability with Indigenous people in Saskatoon is well underway. A Community Guiding Circle (CGC) has made suggestions on ways to undertake the research in community and data collection with participants has begun.

Working with two Indigenous researchers, Alex Smith and Chelsie Collins, Taiwo Ametepee and his team are gathering data through an in person questionnaire from inner-city community members of Saskatoon. Participants engage in a short survey and are then able to provide saliva and/or dry blood spot samples to be tested for HCV, HIV and COVID-19 antibodies. Participants are then connected to avenues of care and appropriate resources following their results. Every effort is made to ensure trauma-informed care and culturally relevant and safe responses when working with participants.



We have submitted and are currently working on multiple grant applications to various institutions that are Indigenous community-led and built. These research proposals were created alongside many community partners and member nations, as well as university scholars.

Do you have ideas for research projects?

We are always looking for guidance on community-based, Indigenous-led research projects that help individuals at risk or with lived experience of HIV, HCV or other STBBI. We want to prioritize land-based research that promotes healing and wellness for Indigenous communities. Please contact the Waniska Centre at info@waniskacentre.ca

ABOUT WANISKA





'Wake up': a command, a call to action, a name

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 Waniska Indigenous Centre for HIV, HCV and STBBI Inequities will develop partnerships with communities and community-based organizations that will help tackle HIV/HCV/STBBI inequities using etuaptmumk (a Two-eyed Seeing approach). Etuaptmumk 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.

WANISKA GUIDING OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

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

Malcolm King, Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research, USask

Laverne Gervais, Ka Ni Kanichihk, MB

John Kim, Public Health Agency of Canada, MB

Alexandria Wilson, Aboriginal Education Research Centre, USask

Linda Larcombe, Manitoba HIV-STBBI Collective Impact Network, UofM

Albert McLeod, Two-Spirited People of Manitoba, MB

Mike Payne, Nine Circles Community Health Centre, MB

Jaqueline Flett, Sisters of Fire, MB

Dr. Amanda Froehlich Chow, School of Public Health, USask

James Whitehawk, Cote First Nation, SK

Beth Blakley, SK HIV Collaborative, SK Prevention Institute, SK

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNER

Ka Ni Kanichihk (www.kanikanichihk.ca)

RESEARCH TEAM

Rebecca Zagozewski, Research Manager, USask

Saydi Harlton, Research Coordinator, USask

Cara Spence, Research Coordinator, USask

Jaida Beaudin, Grant Coordinator, USask

Melissa Morris, Community Coordinator for Ka Ni Kanichihk, MB

Kehinde Ametepee, Project Officer, USask

Sarah MacDonald, Communications Officer, USask

Taiwo Ametepee, Research Associate, USask

Cory Baumgardner, Communications Assistant and Grant Writer, USask

Jarrett Crowe, Communications/Technical Support, USask

Jordan Baran, Administration, USask

Alex Smith, Research Associate, USask

Chelsie Collins, Research Associate, USask





Current Career Opportunities

Postdoctoral Fellow: 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 successful candidate will be an emerging scholar with a strong background and interest in Indigenous health and ground-breaking land-based healing and Indigenous methodologies. For more information or to apply, visit us [online](#).

Indigenous Platform Coordinator: The Canadian Network on Hepatitis C (CanHepC), a national collaborative research and training network on HCV funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health

Research and the Public Health Agency of Canada, is committed to ensure Indigenous engagement and leadership in the Network working side by side with Indigenous communities, leaders and Elders towards HCV elimination goals. This will be done through the creation of an Indigenous Platform to provide robust support for CanHepC in decolonization and Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. For more information or to apply, visit us [online](#).

Hello and Goodbye

Alex Smith, Research Associate for the Waniska Centre, is from Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation in Treaty 5, near Thompson, MB. She is a mother to two small children who now calls Saskatoon home.

Alex is currently enrolled in an MA in Medical Anthropology. Her role with the Waniska Centre will allow her to apply her knowledge, both academic and experiential. Alex also brings several years of experience volunteering within the inner city youth and vulnerable populations.

“As an Indigenous woman and scholar, I was drawn to this position with excitement and hope, due to the nature of being able to apply myself in a positive way,” she said.

Jordan Baran, Pewaseskwan’s Administrative Assistant, was born on Treaty 6 territory in Prince Albert, SK. Jordan brings with her more than 10 years of administration experience and a diploma in Medical Administration and Clinical Procedures from the Saskatoon Business College. Excited about contributing to the team and the work that is being done, Jordan also holds firm beliefs in cultural medicine and healing.

Cory Baumgardner, Pewaseskwan’s and Waniska’s Communications Assistant and Grant Writer, was born and raised on Treaty 6 territory in Saskatoon. Cory feels a deep connection to the city and the local community. Earning a Master of Arts in English, Cory worked with ex-gang members and recovering addicts to explore the intersection of storytelling and healing, paying particular attention to Indigenous conceptualizations of health, including the concept that stories are medicine.

Harvey Thunderchild, Project Officer, is leaving the Waniska Centre team, but will no doubt continue to be a blessing to whomever he graces with his presence. Harvey, a member of Thunderchild First Nation in Treaty 6, joined Pewaseskwan as a project officer in 2020, bringing with him over 40 years of experience working with Indigenous communities, programs and municipal governments across Canada. Harvey shared with us generations of traditional knowledge. He also gifted us with his fluent Cree; he was frequently called upon to open meetings and events in a good way in Cree, help with translation and explain the meanings of Cree words.

Harvey worked on a number of projects, including Miyo-pimâtisiwin, Achimok, Waniska and the World Indigenous Peoples’ Conference on Viral Hepatitis. He shared traditional teachings, organized sweats and other ceremonies, and helped us establish ties with different communities and people in Indigenous government.

OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Manitoba HIV Collective Impact Network (CIN), Winnipeg, MB
National HIV and Retrovirology Laboratories, Winnipeg, MB
Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN), Saskatoon, SK
Communities Alliances And Networks (CAAN), Fort Qu'Appelle, SK
Two-Spirited People of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB
Institute for Global Public Health, University of Manitoba, MB
Ongomiizwin Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing, University of Manitoba, MB
Canadian Network on Hepatitis C (CanHepC), Montreal, QC
The Canadian Association for HIV Research (CAHR), Ottawa, ON
Canadian HIV/AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE), Toronto, ON
Canadian Research Initiative in Substance Misuse (CRISM), Edmonton, AB
Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI), Saskatoon, SK
Canadian Observational Cohort Centre (CANOC), Vancouver, BC



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