

*Senator John Beucher*

## **Métis Health Policy Forum**

# Agenda

*April 5 -6, 2002*

*Delta Bessborough  
601 Spadina Crescent East  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan*

*offered in partnership by:*



NAHO Métis Centre



Métis National Council

# Métis Health Policy Forum

## Thursday, April 4, 2002

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6:00 - 9:00 PM      **Registration**      Mezzanine Level

## Friday, April 5, 2002

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7:30 AM      **Continental Breakfast**      Battleford Room

8:00 AM      **Registration**      Mezzanine Level

8:15 AM      **Grand Entry**      Battleford Room

8:30 AM      **Opening Prayer** – Senator Nora Ritchie      Battleford Room

8:35 AM      **Forum Co-chairs**      Battleford Room

- France Picotte, Chair, Métis Centre Governing Committee
- Dwayne Roth, A/Executive Director, Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc.

8:45 AM      **Welcoming Remarks**      Battleford Room

- Jim Maddin, Mayor, City of Saskatoon
- Clem Chartier, President, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan
- Gerald Morin, President, Métis National Council

9:30 AM      **Overview of NAHO and the Métis Centre**      Battleford Room

- Richard Jock, Executive Director, National Aboriginal Health Organization
- Nathalie Lachance, Director, NAHO Métis Centre

10:00 AM      **Health Break**

10:15 AM      **Stream A: Where are we now?**      Battleford Room

*Open Forum – An Overview of Métis Health Issues*

- Harley Desjarlais, Health Minister, Métis National Council; and President, Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia
- Facilitator: Don Fiddler, Health Director, Métis National Council

12:00 PM      Lunch provided      Battleford Room

1:15 PM      **Stream B: Governance & Health**      Battleford Room

- Joy Ward, Policy Consultant, Health Association of BC

1:45 PM      **Question & Answer Session**      Battleford Room

***Friday, April 5, 2002, con't.***

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2:15 PM	Health Break	
2:30 PM	<b>Concurrent Sessions – Governance &amp; Health</b> <b><i>Session 1: Health - Jurisdictional Issues for the Métis People</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clem Chartier, Minister for Métis Nation Governance, Métis National Council; and, President, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan</li><li>• Dwayne Roth, Lawyer, and, A/Executive Director, Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc.</li></ul> <b><i>Session 2: Metis Health Programs and Services</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pierre Dorion, Cumberland House</li><li>• Lorraine Deschambeau, Aboriginal Liaison, Lakeland Regional Health Authority</li></ul> <b><i>Session 3: How to Build Community Support</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bill Lee, Métis Commission BC</li><li>• Elizabeth Dorion</li></ul> <b><i>Session 4: Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Priscilla Settee, Co-ordinator, Indigenous Peoples Program, University of Saskatchewan</li></ul>	
4:00 PM	<b>Plenary Session</b> The facilitators will report on sessions 1–4 based on reports prepared in each session. The Chair will direct questions and allow participants from each group an opportunity to add comments.	Battleford Room
4:45 PM	<b>Wrap-up – Meeting adjourned for the day</b>	Battleford Room
6:00 PM	<b>Dinner</b>	Battleford Room
7:00 PM	<b>An evening of story-telling hosted by Maria Campbell</b> Participants will be invited to share stories.	Salon Batoche

## ***Saturday, April 6, 2002***

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7:30 AM	<b>Breakfast Caucus – Health Technicians</b>	Room (TBC)
7:30 AM	<b>Continental Breakfast</b>	Battleford Room
8:00 AM	<b>Registration</b>	Mezzanine Level
8:30 AM	<b>Overview of the Agenda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• France Picotte, Chair, Métis Centre Governing Committee</li><li>• Dwayne Roth, A/Executive Director, Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc.</li></ul>	Battleford Room
8:45 AM	<b>Stream C: Health Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Madeleine Dion-Stout</li></ul>	Battleford Room
9:15 AM	<b>Question &amp; Answer Session</b>	Battleford Room
9:45 AM	Health Break	
10:00 AM	<b>Concurrent Sessions – Health Information</b> <i>Session 5: Community Based Initiative</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kim Anderson, The Write Circle</li><li>• Cora Weber-Pillwax</li></ul> <i>Session 6: Government Initiatives to Gather Métis Health Information</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rhea Joseph, Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative</li></ul> <i>Session 7: Needs Assessment Study 101</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Edmund Gus</li></ul>	
11:30 AM	<b>Plenary Session</b> The facilitators will report on sessions 5–7 based on reports prepared in each session. The Chair will direct questions and allow participants from each group an opportunity to add comments.	Battleford Room
12:00 PM	Lunch provided	Battleford Room (C)
1:15 PM	<b>Stream D: Health &amp; Wellness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Albert Delaire, Health Minister, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan</li><li>• Roberta Wraith, Health Manager, Métis Nation of Ontario</li></ul>	Battleford Room

***Saturday, April 6, 2002, con't.***

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1:45 PM	<b>Question &amp; Answer Session</b>	Battleford Room
2:15 PM	Health Break	
2:30 PM	<b>Concurrent Sessions – Health &amp; Wellness</b> <b><i>Session 8: WECHÉ Teachings – A Partnership of Aboriginal Wisdom and Western Scientific Knowledge Applied to the Diabetes Mellitus Puzzle</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Elmer Ghostkeeper</li></ul> <b><i>Session 9: Importance of Culture for Health and Wellness</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leah Dorion, Publishing Coordinator, Gabriel Dumont Institute</li><li>• Lorraine Freeman, President, Métis Resource Centre</li></ul> <b><i>Session 10: Health and Wellness Self-Assessment</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• John Frythers</li></ul> <b><i>Session 11: Traditional Health Knowledge</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walter Schoenthal</li><li>• Isabelle Hempe</li></ul>	
4:00 PM	<b>Plenary Session</b> The facilitators will report on sessions 8–11 based on reports prepared in each session. The Chair will direct questions and allow participants from each group an opportunity to add comments.	Battleford Room
4:30 PM	<b>Plenary: Where are we going?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don Fiddler, Health Director, Métis National Council</li><li>• Nathalie Lachance, Director, Métis Centre</li></ul>	Battleford Room
5:00 PM	<b>Closing Prayer</b>	Battleford Room
6:30 PM	<b>Banquet and Dance</b> Master of Ceremony: Rick Laliberte, MP - Churchill River, SK <b><i>Entertainment provided by:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Senator Hap Boyer</li><li>• League of Nation</li><li>• Edmonton Métis Cultural Dance Society</li><li>• Clearwater Lake Reelers Dance Group</li></ul>	

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***National Aboriginal Health Organization  
Métis Centre***

***Métis Health Policy Forum  
Speaker Biographies***

April 5-6, 2002  
Hotel Delta Bessborough  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

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## CLEM CHARTIER

President  
Métis Nation of Saskatchewan

Clem Chartier was born in Northwestern Saskatchewan in 1946 and raised in the Métis community of Buffalo Narrows. He is known widely around the world as a Métis lawyer, writer, lecturer and activist. Clem received his elementary education at Ile-à-La-Crosse Mission Boarding School. He attended high school at The Pas, Manitoba and Notre Dame College in Wilcox, Saskatchewan. He graduated from Notre Dame with a Bachelor of Arts in 1967 and from the University of Saskatchewan with a Bachelor of Laws in 1978. He has been a member of the Saskatchewan Bar since 1980.

Clem has served in both political and administrative capacities with numerous Indigenous organizations including:

- ∞ Native Youth Association of Canada: Executive Director
- ∞ Métis National Council: Chairperson
- ∞ World Council of Indigenous Peoples: President
- ∞ Canadian Indian Lawyers Association: President
- ∞ Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Policy Analyst
- ∞ Métis National Council: Ambassador
- ∞ Métis Pathways in Buffalo Narrows: Manager

Clem is well known for his work on Métis and Aboriginal rights, participating in several First Ministers Conferences on the Canadian Constitution and in sessions of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations in Geneva. He has also won a landmark decision for Métis with the Morin & Daigneault case, and is currently working on other cases. These victories followed many years of Aboriginal rights research.

Clem has served as President of the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan since February 1998. In this capacity he also serves on the Métis National Council Board of Governors, and currently holds the portfolios of Vice-President and Minister for Métis Nation Governance.

## CORA WEBER-PILLWAX

Author, PhD Candidate  
University of Alberta

Cora Weber-Pillwax is a mother and a grandmother, a Métis woman who has lived a full life with no regrets. She classifies herself as an educator, and she has many years of experience working in the field of education serving the Indigenous communities of northern Alberta. She has been involved in teaching and public school administration at all levels. During these years, her involvement within the communities in which she lived and worked was extensive and deeply rewarding, providing both she and her family with endless learning opportunities. Cora Weber-Pillwax is presently completing her dissertation for Ph.D. at the University of Alberta in Educational Policy Studies, First

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Nations Education and she has accepted a position with the University of Alberta beginning July 2002.

### **DON FIDDLER**

Director of Health  
Métis National Council

*D*on Fiddler is a Métis from Maidstone, Saskatchewan. After serving in the Canadian Army, he Graduated from the University of British Columbia with an Education Degree, supplanted later with an Master of Arts and was accepted as a doctoral candidate after completion of course work leading to a PhD in Leadership Theory at Gonzaga University. Currently, Don is Director of Health for the Métis National Council. Don has served as a public school teacher, a school district coordinator/counselor for Aboriginal children, a developer of night school program for school dropouts, and a university instructor. He served as the Executive Director of the En'owkin Centre, an Aboriginal Fine Arts College, for ten years. Don also served as the President of the Association of Aboriginal Post Secondary Institutes, the Chair of the First Nations Accreditation Board, and the Chair of the Southern Interior Forest Extension and Research partnership in BC. He has also been the owner and president of a business college in Kelowna, B.C. He has traveled extensively and lived in Germany during his armed forces tour, worked and lived as a volunteer teacher in Zambia, and consulted on food distribution in Ethiopia. He also served as Editor for two Aboriginal literary publications for Theytus Books, an Aboriginal publishing company he was responsible for when Executive Director of the En'owkin Centre. He is committed to Health and Education as the foundation for the building of the Métis Nation in Canada.

### **EDMUND GUS**

*E*dmond Gus was born in Bissett, Manitoba, a multicultural mining community. After high school, Ed moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba where he worked in different fields before starting with the Manitoba Métis Federation in January 1978. Ed has worked for a number of national Aboriginal organizations in various capacities. He has traveled to many countries working with the Indigenous Peoples on issues such as capacity building, community planning, socio-economic development, sustainable development, cross cultural awareness training, and environmental areas. Ed has worked with many Elders in Canada and in other countries, and he considers himself fortunate for being able to do so.

Ed has also instructed a course at the University of Victoria titled "Systems Management for Aboriginal Organizations". He has also been appointed to many committees and secretariats over his past 24 years of working with the Métis People in Canada

## **ELMER GHOSTKEEPER**

President & CEO  
Ghostkeeper Synergetics Ltd.

*E*lmer Ghostkeeper is a member of the Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement and the Métis Nation of Alberta, and he lives with his wife Kim and their daughter Winter on their Métis Morgan Horse Farm west of Edmonton, Alberta. He holds a Master of Arts Degree in Cultural Anthropology and a Civil Engineering Technology Diploma. He has authored a book titled: "Spirit Gifting: A Concept of Spiritual Exchange".

Elmer has over thirty years of life care experience, and practices Aboriginal spiritual ceremonies and rituals. He describes life care as holistically satisfying the needs of NeyoYaw, the four bodies of mind, spirit, emotion and matter, in order for a person to live a happy and healthy lifestyle. He shares this holistic approach to life care through WECHE Teachings©, which he describes as a partnership of Aboriginal Wisdom and Western Scientific Knowledge applied to explain and analyze modern day puzzles affecting Aboriginal people. This methodology collects and researches missing pieces of the puzzle into a unified whole and the process is implemented through appropriate service programs. Service programs in Aboriginal forestry, health care and business have been successfully developed and implemented using his teachings.

Elmer is President and CEO of Ghostkeeper Synergetics Ltd., a consulting company jointly owned with his wife Kim. Since 1984, this company has successfully undertaken many contracts requiring co-ordination, administration, management and organizational skills. In January 2001, Elmer attended the Ninth International Conference on Thinking as one of thirty-two International Presenters from twenty-seven countries held at Auckland, New Zealand. Elmer thoroughly enjoys making presentations on WECHE Teachings© and sharing his work with others.

## **FRANCE PICOTTE**

Chair  
Métis Centre Governing Committee

*F*rance Picotte is one of the Métis National Council's two appointees to the Board of Directors of the National Aboriginal Health Organization, and Chair of the Métis Centre Governing Committee. She brings to these positions a wealth of knowledge about health and wellness issues but more importantly she brings forward the important challenges faced by the Métis People. France has now been the elected co-chair of the Métis Nation of Ontario for the past six years and is responsible for two of its most important portfolios; health and training initiatives.

A longtime resident of Timmins, Ontario, France often reminds us that Timmins is not only the heart of Ontario, but also has a "heart of gold". An active community member, France spearheaded the creation of the Timmins Search and Rescue Team and was also President of Métis Nation of Ontario-Timmins Council for many years.

Trained as a laboratory technologist, France has rechannelled her tremendous energy into raising her three children, farming, and running her family business of stained glass and consulting.

## **GERALD MORIN**

President  
Métis National Council

*G*erald Morin was born in Green Lake, Saskatchewan, a traditional Métis community situated about 160 miles north of Saskatoon. Gerald attributes his very happy childhood in large part to the life-style led by a Métis community and the warmth and support provided by his large family. Gerald started life not just speaking one language but two, the first of these being Cree/Michif, a Métis language that combines Cree and French; his second language, English, came later with elementary school.

From 1981-1984 Gerald worked towards his BA with a major in political science. After completing a summer course in Native Law enrolled in law school at the University of Saskatchewan. Three years later, Gerald graduated in law, completed his articling and was admitted to the Saskatchewan bar. He had become a lawyer, but it had been a struggle to keep food on the table during those years. "I got a lot of support from my mom", Gerald says, "and fortunately we were able to stay in low rental housing."

In 1988 after much struggle, a Métis only organization to be called the Métis Society of Saskatchewan, was re-established, and Gerald played a major role in the founding of the organization. He ran for the provincial secretary's position and won it handily, continuing in that office for three years (1989 to 1992). In 1992, Gerald successfully ran for president, a position he held until 1995. While President of the MSS, Gerald also held the office of president of the Métis National Council, a post he continues to hold.

## **JAMES MADDIN**

Mayor  
City of Saskatoon

*J*ames Maddin was born in Kerrobert, Saskatchewan, and attended school in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. Jim returned to Saskatoon in 1968, joined the Saskatoon Police Department in 1972 and retired in 1997. He has two grown children; Kelly is living in Yorkton and Melissa in Calgary. Jim Maddin was elected as Councillor in the City of Saskatoon, Ward 1, in 1997 and was elected Mayor in 2000, taking Office on October 31, 2000.

Mayor Jim Maddin has coached various levels of hockey, ringette and baseball and has held sports administrative positions at both provincial and national levels. He also enjoys music, reading and cooking.

## **JOHN BOUCHER**

Senator  
Métis Nation of Saskatchewan

*J*ohn Boucher was born in St. Louis, Saskatchewan. John is an Elder of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan and has long been involved in Métis organizations and worked toward the recognition of the human rights, land claims, and self-governance of the Métis People. He is a past-President and Vice-President of St-Louis Métis Local #28 and currently sits as an Aboriginal representative on the RCMP's Commanding Officers' Advisory Committee. His contribution toward the goal of self-government has been recognized with a special achievement award from the Métis National Council. In addition, the Government of Canada has awarded Senator Boucher with a national medal for his tireless support of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords.

Senator Boucher has been active in the tradition of lecturing and speaking on topics of Métis history and culture at local, regional and national educational and cultural events, venues and functions. He has provided information and all-important Métis oral history to the writers of books such as Diane Payment's "The Free People – Otipemisiwak: Batoche, Saskatchewan 1870-1930" and Bob Rock's "Petite Marie: A Fairy Tale" Métis cultural animation, television program. Senator Boucher also narrated the introduction to Bob Rock's highly-acclaimed and 1997 National Gold CANPRO Award-winning teleplay, "The Missing Bell of Batoche".

In 1991, Mr. Boucher became a member of the Senate of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan as well as a member of the Senate of the Métis National Council.

On September 24, 1998, in Ottawa, Senator Boucher wrapped a Métis sash around the waist of then- South African President Nelson Mandela and, in so doing, created a burst of international media attention, which, in turn, illuminated instantly the plight of the Métis Nation of Canada as well as any and all of the countless, downtrodden Aboriginal Peoples around the globe. When Nelson Mandela – or "Diamant" as he has been dubbed by Mr. Boucher – addressed Parliament wearing the very Métis sash that J.B. Boucher had just bestowed upon him, it created a symbol for the ages.

## **JOHN FRYTERS**

President and Academic Dean  
Fountain of Life School of Ministry

*J*ohn Fryters, Ph.D., ICADC, PN, is a licensed and ordained Minister with the Apostolic Church of Pentecost of Canada and the Open Bible Faith Fellowship of Canada. At the present time, he is the Senior Pastor of The Church in Meath Park Inc., the President and Academic Dean of Fountain of Life School of Ministry (Bible College), the Coordinator of the western office of the Canadian Training Institute, and the voluntary Executive Director of Jubilation Residential Centres Inc.

He has worked in the addiction management field for more than 30 years. Among many volunteer positions in the addictions field, he served for two consecutive terms on the Board of Directors of the Ontario Addiction Research Foundation and he was Chairman of the International Editorial Advisory Board of "The Journal". Recently, Rev. Fryters also received extensive gambling dependency counseling training in Saskatchewan, Texas and the Netherlands. He is the architect of the Canadian Training Institute's 10-day Compulsive Gambling Counsellor Training Program, which has been delivered to 300 counsellors across North America.

Over the past 12 years, Frythers has consulted extensively with various First Nations, Métis communities and organizations in Saskatchewan in policy and social development, training and education.

## **JOY WARD**

Policy Consultant  
Health Association of BC

Joy Ward is an Aboriginal advisor for the Health Association of BC. Her work with the Health Association involves consulting with BC's Aboriginal leaders in health and CEOs of health authorities, and advocating policies and programs within the mandate of the Health Association. She prepares position papers and makes public presentations at information and education sessions on a variety of aboriginal health issues. Joy has an extensive background as a social worker, a teacher, a mediator, a counsellor and an investigator.

Joy, a Cree Métis and adopted Haida, has traveled a personal journey of healing to become an advocate for Native people including Native youth, particularly those who were fostered or adopted. At the age of five Joy was removed, adopted out, then reunited with her birth family many years later.

In her struggle to determine who she was and where she belonged, she was instructed by an Elder to become a bridge between both the Native and non-Native worlds. She became a Native liaison and fatality investigator for the B.C. Attorney General's Children's Commission, investigating the deaths of children and youth in the province, many of whom were Native and had died tragic deaths. She is now a member of the Commission's Multi-Disciplinary Team that reviews reports and offers professional expertise to the Commissioner.

As Joy tells her story of this struggle to rise to the Elder's challenge, she hopes to serve as an inspirational role model for youth and adults alike as she weaves a unique collage using humor and storytelling. Joy is also a grandmother who rides an "ironhorse" (a Harley Davidson motorcycle) – instead of the traditional painted horse, which is how she was given one of her Indian names, "Little Iron Horse Woman".

**KIM ANDERSON**

The Write Circle

*K*im Anderson (Cree/Métis) has been operating her consulting firm, *The Write Circle* since 1993. The company specializes in research and writing; producing papers, reports, proposals, evaluations, communications and publicity materials for various First Nations and urban Aboriginal organizations. Kim is the author of the non-fiction book "A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood" (Sumach Press, 2000), and she is currently editing a book of essays by Native women on activism. She lives with her partner and their two children in Guelph, Ontario.

**LEAH DORION**

Publishing Coordinator  
Gabriel Dumont Institute

*L*eah Dorion is a Métis person originally from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Leah specializes in curriculum development, educational book publishing, teaches in the post-secondary system and actively promotes cross-cultural awareness. Leah completed her Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Saskatchewan and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Native Studies. She presently works as the publishing coordinator for the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research in Saskatoon.

Leah Dorion is currently a member of the Saskatchewan Education Indian and the Aboriginal Education Provincial Advisory Committee. Leah is a member of the Saskatchewan Publishers Group, and she is on the Saskatchewan Arts Board Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

**LORRAINE DESCHAMBEAU**

Aboriginal Liaison  
Lakeland Regional Health Authority

*L*orraine Deschambeau worked as a Community Health Representative for Lakeland Regional Health Authority 1978-1995. In 1995-1997, she attended Athabasca University and completed Health Development Administration Course. During this time, Lorraine worked on a special project which turned into the Aboriginal Liaison Program in Lakeland Regional Health Authority in 1997. Lorraine continues to take courses by home study towards degree program, and she has worked for the same organization for 24 years.

As Aboriginal Liaison for the Lakeland Regional Health Authority, Lorraine works with specific Métis communities and other Aboriginal groups and organizations in the region. She is working in a very unique program as many liaisons are now linked to hospitals. Lorraine notes that work in a public health setting involves a lot of community development, and she does not know of another position in Alberta that is similar to Lakeland Regional Health Authority as it addresses Métis specific health issues. Lorraine is actively involved in community organizations, and she is chairperson of Lac

La Biche Friendship Centre, past president and member of Métis local and volunteer member of other community other groups. On a personal note, Lorraine enjoys reading, music and spending time with her family.

## **MADELEINE DION-STOUT**

Aboriginal Health Care Specialist

*M*adeleine Dion-Stout is a Cree speaker from the Kehewin First Nation in Alberta with strong Métis ties. Her Uncle Joe Dion was the first President of the Métis Association of Alberta and many of her extended family members proudly claim Métis ancestry. Madeleine is very involved in Aboriginal health development and sits on many boards and committees serving Aboriginal groups and women, two of which are the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Population Health and the Suicide Prevention Advisory Committee. She was appointed to the National Forum on Health by the Prime Minister, and she served as a Special Assistant to the Honorable Monique Bégin, then the Minister of Health and Welfare Canada. She is past Assistant Professor in Canadian Studies and the founding Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Education, Research and Culture at Carleton University and is also past President of the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada. She graduated from the Edmonton General Hospital as a Registered Nurse and now holds a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing with distinction from the University of Lethbridge where she has since been awarded a Distinguished Alumni Award. She has also earned a Master of Arts degree in International Affairs at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University. As co-author and author of several technical papers on Aboriginal health and as a frequent speaker at local, national and international conferences, Madeleine has worked to keep Aboriginal perspectives and aspirations central to Aboriginal health and health care.

## **NATHALIE LACHANCE**

Director  
NAHO Métis Centre

*N*athalie Lachance is originally from a small town in Quebec. She has lived in various regions of Canada while pursuing education and career opportunities. Nathalie received her Bachelor of Arts in Economics and a Graduate Diploma in Institutional Administration from Concordia University, Montréal, QC. She was awarded her Master of Public Administration from the Université de Moncton. During her seven years in university, Nathalie worked for several federal and provincial departments in the areas of policy research and quality management.

While living in Ottawa, Nathalie was the Project Coordinator for the Métis National Council from 1996-1998, working specifically in the areas of health and literacy. One of Nathalie's health-related projects was to initiate Métis Youth Talking Circles on HIV/AIDS. These circles were youth-controlled and established in Métis communities in

Ontario and Western Canada. In the area of literacy, Nathalie worked directly with the Métis writers to develop interesting reading materials for adult literacy programs. While at the MNC, Nathalie was also a liaison participant in the original discussions regarding the formation of the Aboriginal Health Institute, which is now operating as the National Aboriginal Health Organization, NAHO. From 1999-2001, Nathalie was employed as the development officer for the Faculté Saint-Jean of the University of Alberta.

Nathalie is fluent in French and English. She is involved in the Métis community in a proactive fashion and remains up-to-date with the health and social issues that affect Métis people on a daily basis.

### **NORA RITCHIE**

Chair of the Senate  
Métis Nation of Saskatchewan

Nora Ritchie was born and raised in Saskatoon, where she attended St. Joseph School. She married at an early age, raised nine children, and she presently has 25 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. In 1969, Nora became a founding member of the Saskatoon Métis Society Local #11, and a field worker for the Métis Society of Saskatchewan. In 1971, Nora founded the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association, and in 1972, she was Provincial Coordinator of this Association, eventually being elected to Provincial President. A founding member of the Board of Directors of the Native Women's Association of Canada, she sat on their board until 1975. She sat on the Board of Directors for the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, and was later elected chairperson, the only woman elected to this Provincial Board of Directors. It should be noted that Nora ran unsuccessfully as a candidate for Saskatoon City Council, the only Aboriginal person to have done so. In November 1974, Nora was among 50 women honoured during the International Women's Year for their contribution to the community of Saskatoon. From 1977 to 1983, Nora worked for Native Employment Services, and then as a family worker for the Saskatoon Métis Society Local #11 from 1983-1988. In 1987, Nora was elected President of the Saskatoon Métis Society Local #11, and in 1992 and 1995, she was elected to the Election Commission for the Saskatchewan Métis Society for the Provincial Métis Election.

In addition to receiving many honours, Nora was the subject of three books: "Some Outstanding Women" (International Women of the Year Project), "A Pictorial History of the Métis and Non-Status Indian in Saskatchewan" (Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission), and "Gabriel's Children" (Rita Schilling, Turner-Warick Printers Inc.). Nora was honoured at the Saskatchewan Legislature in Regina as an outstanding woman in Saskatchewan, which recognized all her achievements for Celebrate Saskatchewan. Her picture and biography are displayed along side other outstanding women in the Saskatoon Diefenbaker Centre. Nora was chosen Mrs. Batoche, 1992, and in December 1993, she took the Oath of Office as a Métis Senator. She currently sits on the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Senate as Chair.

Nora has helped to establish Women's Referral Centres, Half-Way Homes and day care centres across Saskatchewan. Nora has encouraged Aboriginal women to become aware of their rights, and she works tirelessly to increase their awareness and to achieve improvements in the problems they face, such as discrimination, housing, education, addiction issues and the care of Aboriginal foster children. Nora is actively involved with both the Saskatoon Gabriel Dumont Métis Local #11 and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan.

**PIERRE DORION**

Cumberland House

Pierre Dorion is a trapper and fisherman who was born and raised in the Cumberland House region. He has seen many changes to the land over the years. Pierre has several children and many grandchildren. He was on the Board of Directors of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan for seven years.

**PRISCILLA SETTEE**

Director, Indigenous Peoples Program  
Extension Division  
University of Saskatchewan

Priscilla Settee, a Cree Indian from northern Saskatchewan, and she is the Director of the Indigenous Peoples Program with the Extension Division at the University of Saskatchewan and a tenured faculty member. Settee is associated provincially, nationally and internationally with several boards and organizations including Indigenous Women's Network, the Indigenous Environmental Network, and the Joe Duquette Aboriginal High School. Settee holds a B.A.(University of Guelph), B.Ed.(University of Saskatchewan), and an M.Ed. in Curriculum Design with a focus on Indigenous knowledge in the Sciences and Intellectual Property Rights and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the interdisciplinary program in Education and Agriculture (University of Saskatchewan). Her research examines Indigenous Knowledge Systems and threats to that knowledge base. Settee is an active participant with the Intercessional Working Group on Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Priscilla has been an advisor to the International Development Research Centre, which produced the books "Seeding Solutions" Volume 1 & 2. She is co-editor of the book "Expressions in Canadian Native Studies"(2000).

**RICHARD JOCK**

Executive Director  
National Aboriginal Health Organization

Richard Jock is a member of the Mohawks of Akwesasne. He has held numerous positions in health field, working for both First Nations organizations and the federal government. Currently Executive Director of the National Aboriginal Health organization (NAHO), Mr. Jock's previous positions included Director General

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for Program Policy, Transfer Secretariat and Planning with Health Canada, Director of Health and Social Services for the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne; Ontario Regional Director for Health Canada; Director of the First Nations Health commission at the Assembly of First nations; and Director of the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program at Health Canada.

# National Aboriginal Health Organization



Métis Health Policy Forum  
April 5 – 6, 2002

Note: Actual presentation may vary from outline.



## Vision Statement

The National Aboriginal Health Organization, an Aboriginal designed and controlled body, will influence and advance the health and well-being of Aboriginal Peoples by carrying out knowledge-based strategies.



## **NAHO's Origins**

- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) consultations identify need for national health institute in 1996
- Aboriginal Health Institute recommended by National Forum on Health in 1997
- Speech from the Throne commits Federal Government to establish the Institute - 1998



## **NAHO's Brief History**

- Key dates leading up to NAHO's Incorporation
  - 1998: Consultations five National Aboriginal Organizations
  - June 1999: Cabinet approved design framework allowing for implementation
  - March 10, 2000: Organization for the Advancement of Aboriginal Peoples' Health is incorporated



## **NAHO's Brief History...**

- Summer 2000: Board members appointed and recruitment of staff began
- Summer 2000: New corporate logo selected
- December 2000: Board of Directors change name to: National Aboriginal Health Organization
- 2001: Establishment of Centres for Inuit, First Nations and Métis



## **Principles of Uniqueness**

The National Aboriginal Health Organization is unique in that we:

- Are founded on and are committed to unity while respecting diversity
- Gather, create, interpret, disseminate and use knowledge on Aboriginal traditional and western contemporary healing and wellness approaches
- View community as the primary focus and view research methodologies as tools for supporting Aboriginal communities in managing health
- Reflect the values and principles contained in traditional knowledge and practices



## **NAHO's Goals**

- To improve and promote the health of Aboriginal Peoples, through knowledge-based activities
- To promote health issues pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples by means that include communications and public education activities



## **NAHO's Goals...**

- To facilitate and promote research and develop research partnerships
- To foster the recruitment, retention, training and utilization of Aboriginal People in the delivery of health care
- To affirm Aboriginal traditional healing practices and medicines and to ensure such practices receive recognition



## NAHO's Role

- Knowledge transfer
- Provide a support network for Aboriginal health workers and communities
- Share information on best practices and health issues
- Advocate health research in the area of evidence-based decision making to ensure the unique needs of Aboriginal Peoples are met



## Member Organizations



- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP)
- Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC)
  - Collaboration with Pauktuutit – Inuit Women's Association of Canada
- Métis National Council (MNC)
- Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)
- Assembly of First Nations (AFN)





## NAHO Board of Directors as of January 2002

**Front row: L to R**

- Dr. Judith Bartlett – Chair
- Chief Maureen Chapman – Vice-Chair
- Noreen McAteer – Secretary
- Morley Norton – Treasurer

**Back row: L to R**

- Eric Shirt – Chair, TH&H
- Anaoyok Alookey
- Mary Wilman
- France Picotte – Chair MCGC
- Fjola Hart-Wasekeesikaw – Chair, HRHI
- Heather McNeill – Chair, HPCBPE
- Bill Lyall – Chair, ICGC
- Theresa Hall



**Absent:** Chief Chris Shade – Chair, FNCGC;  
Liza Charlo-Peiper



## NAHO Priority Advisory Committees

Based on common areas of interest from the national consultations through the Aboriginal organizations, three Priority Advisory Committees were established:

- Health Research and Health Information
- Health Policy, Capacity Building and Public Education
- Traditional Health and Healing



## NAHO's Three Centres

- Will focus on the unique needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis
- Location of Centres to be determined through development of criteria and a transparent process



## Examples of potential collaboration

- Best practices
- Sharing of research ethics
- New models
- Information and communications





## **Examples of partnerships and linkages**

- First Nations and Inuit Regional Longitudinal Health Survey
- Development of a discussion paper on Palliative and End-of-Life Care
- Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Canadian Medical Association Feb. 2002
- Partnership established with Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada (ANAC)
- Linkage: Governing Committee Participation - CPHI
- Linkage with Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health (IAPH) established
- Canada Health Infoway: Participation on Strategic Planning Committee



## **Milestones Reached**

- Official launch of NAHO February 2001
- Unveiling of English and French web sites  
Check it out: [www.naho.ca](http://www.naho.ca)
- Presentation to the Standing Senate Committee, May 2001
- Formal submission to Romanow Commission on Health Care in Canada



## **Milestones Reached...**

- Production of First Annual Report – August 2001
- Hiring of Directors for the three Centres
- First annual Public meeting - September 2001
- Jan. 2002 NAHO's newsletter, "NAHO Network News" for quarterly distribution
- Hosted the Aboriginal Health Information Symposium – February 2002



## **Work Underway**

- Creation of a NAHO National Clearinghouse
- Daily media monitoring for trends in health and Aboriginal news
- Identification of Performance Indicators for Internal Evaluation procedures
- Developing a Poll of Aboriginal Peoples' opinions: future Report Card



## **Work Underway...**

- Research Scans to focus NAHO's activities
- Production of a NAHO Journal with guest Editors
- Distribution list for print media
- Project collaboration in National forums – Example: National Elders Conference
- First Nations Centre management of Regional Health Survey



## **NAHO'S Activity List 2002-2003**

- April 23-24, 2002  
Health Information Ethics and Protection  
Aylmer, QC
- May 2002  
Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada Forum



## **NAHO'S Activity List 2002-2003**

- **May 29-31, 2002**  
Health Community Control Services  
Aylmer, QC
  
- **June 19, 2002 target date**  
Commission on the Future of Health  
Care in Canada Forum



## **NAHO'S Activity List 2002-2003**

- **July 9-11, 2002**  
Elders Gathering  
Vancouver, BC
  
- **September 2002**  
Western Regional Forum



## **NAHO'S Activity List 2002-2003**

- September 2-6, 2002  
Healing our Spirits Worldwide  
Albuquerque, New Mexico
- September 2002  
Eastern Regional Forum  
Halifax, NS



## **Summary**

- We are still a new organization - NAHO began operation in March 2000
- NAHO continues to evolve
- Challenges we face:
  - To be accountable to the Aboriginal Peoples in the Centres and in the organizations as they direct us in our service to the Peoples.
  - To make a difference in the health of Aboriginal Peoples



## **Métis Centre News**

- I would now like to introduce Nathalie Lachance, Director of the Métis Centre who will provide you with information about activities underway in the Métis Centre.



**Métis Health Policy Forum**  
Bessborough Delta, Saskatoon, SK

## The Métis Centre

National Aboriginal Health Organization



### Métis Centre Governing Committee Members (MCGC)

- France Picotte, Chair
- Morley Norton, Vice-chair (ex-officio)
- Connie Boyd, MNO
- Deborah Barron-McNabb, MMF
- Albert Delaire, MNS
- Sue Dahlseide, MNA
- Tim Low, MPCBC
- Don Fiddler



## The Métis Centre *Vision*



*The Métis Centre is dedicated to improving the physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual health of the Métis People in Canada.*

*It is our fundamental belief that the advancement and sharing of knowledge in the field of Métis health is key to empowering the Métis People in Canada.*



## The Métis Centre Statement of Principles

As per the design and bylaws of NAHO, the Métis Centre Governing Committee has been established to guide the development and management of the Métis Centre.

Further, the Métis Centre:

- Will be inclusive of all Métis People in Canada; and respectful of all Aboriginal Peoples and their cultures, practices and traditions
- Is committed to honouring the values, beliefs, views of all Aboriginal Peoples in all that we do
- Agrees to work together to strengthen, support and build our collective knowledge and abilities in a collaborative partnership in the governing and functioning of the Métis Centre



## The Métis Centre Statement of Principles (continued)

- Is devoted to the protection and the recognition of traditional Métis knowledge, healing and wellness practices
- Recognizes Métis health care as a specialized field
- Committed to the enhancement and provision of career opportunities in the health field for the Métis People in Canada
- Will strive to strengthen and increase the capacity of the Métis People workforce in Canada with the goal of delivering the highest standards of care
- Is evolutionary and responsive to the health and wellness needs of the Métis People in Canada



## First steps...

### Establish a solid organization:

- Protocol/MOU with the MNC
- Select a logo and name
- Option paper re: Type of Centre
- Communications with Métis individuals and organizations



**To improve and promote,  
through knowledge-based activities,  
the health of Métis People in Canada**

- **Develop an Environmental Scan for the Métis People in Canada**
- **Conduct information sessions with Métis individuals and organizations**
- **Assist in capacity-building at the community level – proposal-writing workshops**



**To promote health issues pertaining to Métis  
People in Canada by means that include  
communications and public education activities**

- **Provide information to national, provincial, regional & local Métis governing bodies to assist them in developing Métis health policies**
- **Partnerships with Métis organizations, including organizations regrouping Métis youth, women and Elders, to develop health information material**
- **Co-operation / information sharing with health organizations**



**To facilitate and promote research  
and develop research partnerships  
relating to Métis health issues**

- Template for community-research – ethics
- Development of a strategy on research interests and goals
- Identify opportunities for research partnerships



**To foster the recruitment, retention,  
training and utilization of Métis People in  
Canada in the delivery of health care**

- Establishment of a “database” of Métis health professionals
- Establishment of networking and mentoring programs for Métis health professionals
- Identifying training gaps, barriers and opportunities for Métis



To affirm traditional Métis healing practices through validating holistic traditional practices & medicines...

- Begin the process for the recognition of traditional Métis healers, health knowledge and healing practices
- Participation in activities undertaken by Métis organizations in promoting traditional health knowledge



How can we do it?

*By working together!*

- Communications and networking
- Partnerships and co-operation with Métis organizations, health organizations
- Openness and transparency
- Accountability



## The Métis Centre "On Line"

Check out the Métis Website:

- [www.naho.ca/metiscentre](http://www.naho.ca/metiscentre)

Drop us an email:

- [metiscentre@nahc.ca](mailto:metiscentre@nahc.ca)



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**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
MÉTIS CENTRE**



**Métis Health Policy Forum  
Stream B: Governance & Health  
Friday, April 5, 2002 at 1:15 PM**

**Speaker:** Joy Ward, Policy Consultant, Health Association of BC  
**Title:** Understanding Factors that Impact Aboriginal Peoples' Wellness and Healing – One Woman's Professional and Personal Perspective

On average Aboriginal people have much poorer health than their non-Aboriginal counterparts including shorter life expectancy, higher death rates from almost all causes, and children that are less likely to survive and achieve healthy growth and development.

This health status gap is well known and long-standing. Although it is narrowing it is still unacceptable. In recognition of this the BC Provincial Health Officer specified for the year 2000 Provincial Health Goal #5 as "Improved Health for Aboriginal People".

However before the attempt to "fix things" begins, it is essential to understand how and why the health, wellness, and healing of aboriginal people have been damaged.

Aboriginal people experience significant inequities as a result of the historical legacy of our country and our province.

The presenter is an Aboriginal woman currently employed as a policy consultant to the Health Authorities and will address the goal of the need for action to reduce these inequities in a unique presentation that includes both her professional and personal background as an Aboriginal woman on her own journey of healing.

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**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
MÉTIS CENTRE**



**Métis Health Policy Forum  
Session 2: Métis Health Programs and Services  
Friday, April 5, 2002 at 2:30 PM**

**Speaker:** Lorraine Deschambeau, Lakeland Regional Health Authority, AB  
**Title:** Métis Health Project "Health for All"

The "Health for All" project was the result of a cumulative effort of Métis communities and Lakeland Regional Health Authority. The goal of the project was to improve the health of Métis communities by providing half-time settlement Nurses to enhance current programs and services.

The intent of the project, challenges, successes, learnings and expansion of this project will be part of the presentation. As well as presenting this project Ms. Deschambeau will some of the current initiatives currently undertaken by the Lakeland Regional Health Authority and Métis communities.

**Speaker:** Pierre Dorion, Cumberland House, SK

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**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
MÉTIS CENTRE**



**Métis Health Policy Forum  
Session 4: Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge  
Friday, April 5, 2002 at 2:30 PM**

**Speaker:** Priscilla Settee, University of Saskatchewan

Drawing on her research, Priscilla Settee will talk about Indigenous Knowledge systems which exist not only in Canada but throughout the globe. She will describe some of the work she is engaged in that address the threats to Indigenous Knowledge as well as her work and other colleagues in preserving that knowledge.

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**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
MÉTIS CENTRE**



**Métis Health Policy Forum  
Stream C: Health Information  
Saturday, April 6, 2002 at 8:45 AM**

**Speaker:** Madeleine Dion-Stout

Health information is very important for all to have, especially in an era of health reform where knowledge is power and information is the “new money”, so to speak. Therefore, appropriate opportunities and settings have to be cultivated, encouraged and sustained. “Buying-in” without “selling-out” means that fundamental values, beliefs, values and principles are front and center to health information. This presentation will show why this is so urgent for Métis peoples and it will look at how meaningful and timely health information is possible even in today's complex health and health care context.

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**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
MÉTIS CENTRE**



**Métis Health Policy Forum  
Session 5: Community-Based Health Information  
Saturday, April 6, 2002 at 10:00 AM**

**Speaker:** Kim Anderson, The Write Circle  
**Title:** Community Based Research: Making Change From Within

Kim Anderson will talk about her work doing community based research with Aboriginal organizations and First Nations in Ontario. She has recently completed a study entitled *Tenuous Connections: Urban Aboriginal Youth Sexual Health and Pregnancy* for the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. This study uses qualitative and quantitative research to portray current realities of urban youth -- with the intent of informing program and policy development among Friendship Centres in Ontario. Kim will share research techniques and challenges, drawing examples from her own experiences.

**Speaker:** Cora Weber-Pillwax  
**Title:** Research and Wellness: Building Community through Action Research

In 1999, an action research project addressing adult literacy was initiated by the executive of the Regional Council Zone IV, Métis Nation of Alberta. After an intensive application process, funding was granted by the National Literacy Secretariat for a fifteen-month project involving Métis people living within the boundaries of the city of Edmonton, Alberta.

This presentation will describe the process that was followed in the implementation of the research project. As an action research project, the process was in some ways more important than the content. Nonetheless, no participant ever lost sight of the goal: identifying barriers to personal literacy. The recommendations that evolved from this community-based action research project reflect the holistic perspective of the participants in describing their life experiences within the context of barriers to personal literacy and personal well-being.

Some of the factors identified by the Métis participants as highly significant in the development of healthy Métis individuals, families, and communities will be highlighted from the recommendations

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**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
MÉTIS CENTRE**



**Métis Health Policy Forum  
Session 7: Needs Assessment Study 101  
Saturday, April 6, 2002 at 10:00 AM**

**Speaker:** Edmund Gus

Interactive presentation:

- How does one do a needs assessment?
  - What is a needs assessment?
  - What is the purpose?
  - Who is involved? In what capacity?
  - Who is served?
  - What is the approach to utilize for a successful needs assessment?
  - Is there a protocol to follow?
  - What is done with the results?
  - By whom?
  - Where do we go from here?
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**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
MÉTIS CENTRE**



**Métis Health Policy Forum  
Session 8: WECHE Teachings – A Partnership in Aboriginal Wisdom  
and Western Scientific Knowledge Applied to the Diabetes  
Mellitus Puzzle  
Saturday, April 6, 2002 at 2:30 PM**

**Speaker:** Elmer Ghostkeeper, Ghostkeeper Synergetics Ltd.

WECHE Teachings© is a partnership of Aboriginal wisdom and western scientific knowledge applied to analyze, explain and understand modern day puzzles affecting Aboriginal people. This breakthrough methodology researches and collects missing pieces of the puzzle in a unified whole and the process is implemented through applied programs. The author will explain his worldview of Noyo Yaw- four bodies so the reader can understand and get a feel for the context of the presentation. Aboriginal wisdom and western scientific knowledge will be briefly discussed as different belief systems but equally valid. A circle of knowing will be described to demonstrate that both systems must be used in a partnership to analyze the unknowing into a unified whole of the circle. The applied model of WECHE Teachings© partnership will be thoroughly described. It will then be applied to analyze, explain and understand the diabetes mellitus puzzle and an Aboriginal Diabetes Wellness Program for the service, treatment and management of Aboriginal people affected by the disease.

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**WECHE Teachings©**  
**A Partnership of Aboriginal Wisdom and Western Scientific Knowledge**  
**Applied to the Diabetes Mellitus Puzzle**

By  
**Elmer Ghostkeeper, MA**  
December 1, 2000

**INTRODUCTION**

WECHE Teachings© is a partnership of Aboriginal wisdom and western scientific knowledge applied to analyze, explain and understand modern day puzzles affecting Aboriginal people. This breakthrough methodology researches and collects missing pieces of the puzzle in a unified whole and the process is implemented through applied programs. The author will explain his worldview of Neyo Yaw – four bodies so the reader can understand and get a feel for the context of the paper. Aboriginal wisdom and western scientific knowledge will be briefly discussed as different belief systems but equally valid. A circle of knowing will be described to demonstrate that both systems must be used in a partnership to analyze the unknowing into a unified whole of the circle. The applied model of the WECHE Teachings© partnership will be thoroughly described. It will then be applied to analyze, explain and understand the diabetes mellitus puzzle and an Aboriginal Diabetes Wellness Program for the service, treatment and management of Aboriginal people affected by the disease.

**NEYO YAW- FOUR BODIES**

Hello, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Elmer Ghostkeeper. I am Metis, an Aboriginal person as defined in the Canadian Constitution Act of 1982, born in Northern Alberta, and a member of the Metis Nation of Canada. I grew up speaking predominantly Bushland Cree and English until the age of fifteen. My father Adolphus and mother Elsie Ghostkeeper were spiritual people who practiced a syncretic form of religion. They combined Aboriginal spiritual beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and sacrifices with Roman Catholic Christianity at home, on holy days and at mass. They also prayed in both languages.

My perspective of the universe is strongly influenced by the local Aboriginal wisdom taught to me by my parents and wise people within the Metis community. The core of my belief is I consist of Neyo Yaw or four bodies that are equal, cannot be subdivided and are aspects of my whole. These are my mental, spiritual, emotional and physical aspects of my soul being. If you can make a mental picture of a circle this will help me explain and you better understand the concept of Neyo Yaw.

The top of the circle represents my mental body, coming from the direction east at sunrise as a gift from a grandfather spirit indicated and signaled by the color yellow. The eastern sky at sunrise is usually a brilliant yellow in my region. When I arise in the morning I face the east and say a prayer asking for a strong mind and giving thanks for my source of fire, heat, light and energy.

Continue clockwise from the top to a quarter turn and you will face south and it represents my spiritual body gifted by a grandfather spirit indicated and signaled by the color white. The southern sky at midday is usually white with a pale blue background. At midday I face the south and say a prayer giving thanks for the source of my breath of life, daily food and organic matter, and the return of life to the region after the winter season.

Continue clockwise from the quarter turn to the bottom of the circle and you will face west and it represents my emotional body gifted by a grandfather spirit indicated and signaled by the color red. The western sky at sunset is mainly red. At this change of the day I face the west and say a prayer for my unconditional love of myself, review my feelings, seek forgiveness and give thanks for my source of water. At birth I am about 98% water and if I live to a ripe old age I will leave with about 66% water content.

Continue clockwise a quarter turn and you will face north and it represents my physical body of matter gifted by a grandfather spirit and indicated and signaled by the color dark blue. When I prepare for sleep I face north and say a prayer for my source of the north wind that gives movement to my physical body.

My wisdom beliefs are each day of my life is a gift of unconditional love from the Great Father and Mother Earth. Grandfather spirits, spirit helpers and dream spirits provide gifts throughout the day and night. My aspect of mind, spirit, emotion and matter create and manifest into my soul being. Every day as

I arise I have the choice of creating a happy and healthy lifestyle or a sick and sad lifestyle. My daily challenge is to balance my four bodies. Obtaining this balance gifts harmony of wellness. Life is shared throughout the day by practicing spiritual exchange. This Aboriginal wisdom, beliefs and values determine how I behave and form relationships within myself and with other beings.

## **ABORIGINAL WISDOM**

I prefer to use wisdom now to describe the worldview of Aboriginal people as opposed to traditional knowledge or traditional ecological knowledge. From my point of view the latter concepts were invented by others and not by Aboriginal people. I attempt to mentally diagram Aboriginal wisdom by forming a picture of a circle with the four colors representing the four directions of east, south, west and north and rotating clock wise and the four bodies of mind, spirit, emotion and matter. From my perspective, the underpinning of wisdom is the experience gained from trying to learn, understand and know something. It is experiential learning through interactions. Sometimes one only has to try something once like taking the first breath of life, or the first step of walking, or the heart taking its first beat, or the ear hearing its first sound in order to learn it. Wisdom sits in experience. Sometimes one has to try it many times to learn it. To learn it does not necessarily mean to understand it. To understand it does not mean one can explain it. Wisdom sits in everything and in places waiting to be learned and released. Wise Aboriginal people pass on their wisdom through oral histories, stories, teachings and lessons.

There is a Bushland Cree prayer that teaches that life is recorded in water and stone. This is a profound insight. I fully believe in this prayer but cannot fully explain its wisdom because I have not yet earned the experience to learn its entire teaching and lesson. It might mean that life's experience is recorded and passed on by and through the four elements of fire, earth, water and air because they have been in and used by other beings. It is interesting to note these four elements do not change, are timeless, sexless and treat all life with equality.

It might mean that everything is one because everything is made up of the four elements as created by the Great Father. It might mean that the three aspects of mind, spirit and emotion of things change and the physical aspect remains the same between birth and death. It is worthy to point out that western scientific knowledge has not been successful in measuring wisdom because it cannot mathematically measure and quantify experience and the aspects of mind, spirit and emotion.

## **WESTERN SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE**

What is science? From my perspective science is a belief system developed in the western world, created by scientists for westerners, as a method or another way of knowing something other than through religious doctrine. I would like to make a mental reality construct of science using the Cartesian split model or the separation of mind from matter of the y-axis to represent space and the x-axis to represent time and the coordinates beginning at O in order to describe and explain it. This picture diagrams the pattern of how the western scientific belief system is utilized to create knowledge. I would like to now discuss what I believe are some fundamental beliefs that created science.

The first fundamental belief of science, through deductive reasoning, is an attempt to subjectively mathematically plot the measurement of something to be objectively known. To the degree that this is successful then the thing measured is thought to be real. In other words, this is the mathematical measurement of reality in an attempt to prove the physical world, nature, environment and their phenomena.

The second fundamental belief of science is the thought that nature consists of laws and principles that must be discovered in order to know, explain and understand the physical world. What emerges in the process is empirical data that then becomes information, and information becomes knowledge, and packaged knowledge becomes scientific concepts described as theories of natural laws and principles.

The third fundamental belief of science is to use experimental testing to better explain and understanding reality and related phenomena. If the test can be replicated time after time then it must exist in the physical world.

The fourth fundamental belief of science is what I call the culture/nature duality. It is interesting to note that the word culture comes the word cultivate. It is thought by some that the more you cultivate nature the more you have culture. Thus the more separated one is from nature the more cultured one is. This accurate interpretation of the true meaning of culture became clear to me when I was viewing fungi culturing in a

petri dish. The scientific belief is nature can be cultivated and in the process a plant and an animal are thought to become domesticated and have a scientific selected advantage over the wild one. The concept of culture then becomes another scientific belief of how to cultivate nature for its natural resources.

Science would not exist, in my opinion, without the concept of the culture/nature duality. I arrived at this stage of my thinking in December of 1996 and realized something very important was missing from this belief system and because of it science was fundamentally flawed. So the question was what was missing from this picture?

## **A CIRCLE OF KNOWING**

In December 1996 I awoke from a very deep dream with this mental picture in my mind's eye. It was a picture of a circle and plotted in the right hand quadrant was the Cartesian split model of the y and x coordinates and the word science inscribed within and within the remaining three quadrants the word wisdom inscribed. This picture is now what I call my circle of knowing. I would like to interpret its message and meaning for you.

The message of my dream was instructive showing what was missing from science. It showed that wisdom constitutes three-quarters of my knowing and science makes up the remaining one-quarter and when added together form a whole circle of knowing. Science can only deal with the physical aspect of something to be known and wisdom deals with the mental, emotional and spiritual aspects, or aspects science cannot mathematically measure and quantify. When wisdom and science are added together they create a holistically way of knowing. The next challenge was then to create a model to apply this breakthrough way of thinking to better analyze, explain and understand modern day puzzles affecting Aboriginal people into a unified whole.

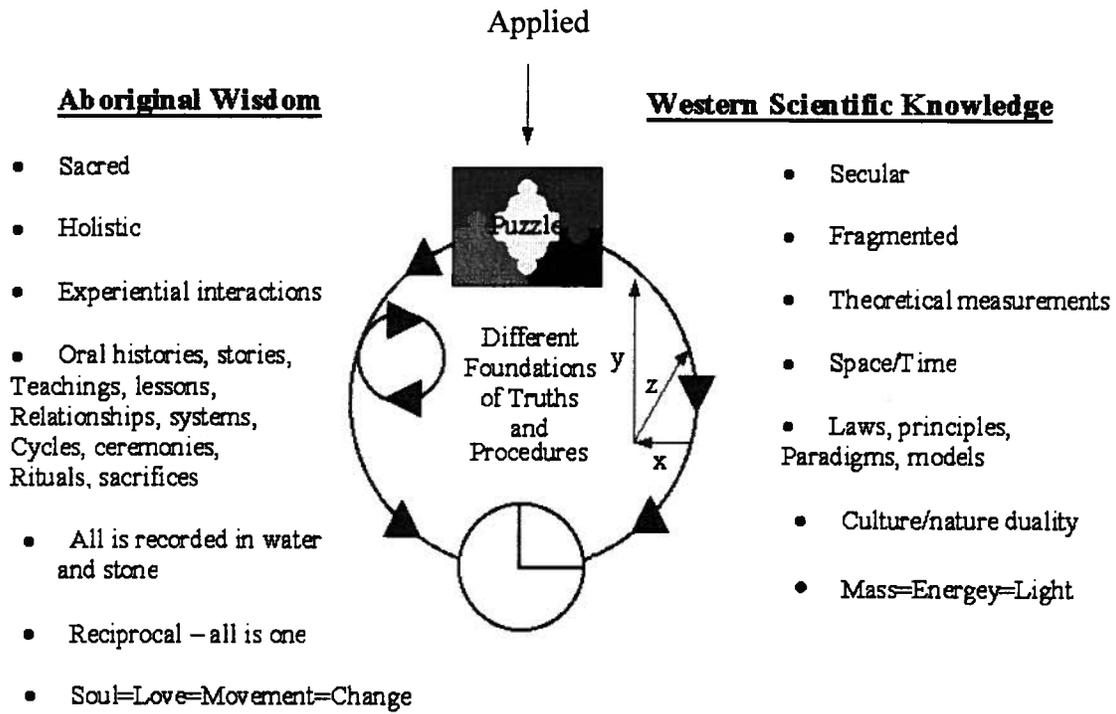
## **WECHE Teachings© Applied Model**

The WECHE Teachings© applied model to analyze, explain and understand modern day puzzles affecting Aboriginal people is created by visualizing a circle as shown in diagram 1. At the top of the circle the puzzle to be addressed is entered with the understanding and acceptance that both beliefs systems have different foundations of truths and procedures. The left side of the circle represents Aboriginal wisdom indicated by a circle rotating clockwise and the right side represents western scientific knowledge indicated by the Cartesian split model of the y, x and z coordinates. The bottom of the circle is indicated by my circle of knowing of the partnership of Aboriginal wisdom and the Western Scientific Knowledge creating the unified whole. I would like to summarize some key points of both belief systems when applying the model.

The Aboriginal wisdom belief system is sacred and holistic because it retains Neyo Yaw or the four bodies of the mind, spirit, emotion and matter of the person applying it. The underpinning of wisdom is learning through experiential interactions. Aboriginal wisdom is about life. It can be transmitted through Wise people's oral histories and stories and within them are their teachings and lessons. This experience is primarily about relationships, about the systems and cycles of life gained by participating in ceremonies, rituals and sacrifices. The Bushland Cree prayer that teaches life is recorded in water and stone is a constant reminder that life is reciprocal and all is one as created by the Great Father and Mother Earth. We are soul beings and unconditional love provides movement and change.

The Western Scientific Knowledge belief system is secular and fragmented because it is founded upon the belief that mind can be separated from matter and thus represses the emotionality and spirituality of the person applying it. The language of science is theoretical mathematical measurement of space/time and to the extent phenomena or things studied can be plotted on the Cartesian split then they are thought to exist. Natural laws and principles are thought to exist and to govern nature, living and non-living things, and thus to be discovered and known as empirical data and information. Data becomes information and information becomes knowledge that can be taught, learned and applied through theories and models. When sufficient knowledge about things are accumulated it is believed to sometimes cause a breakthrough, a paradigm shift and a leap ahead in western scientific thought. The main underpinning of science is the culture/nature duality. According to this worldview, to the degree that nature is cultivated and domesticated the western world has gained culture. Nature is primarily viewed as mass and mass is energy and energy is light. Light is thought to travel in particles or waves depending on who is viewing it. The speed of light is thought to define and confine the physical world and the universe. Now I would to take this opportunity to applied this model to analyze the diabetes mellitus puzzle affecting Aboriginal peoples.

**Partnerships  
Diagram 1**



**WECHE Teachings©**

Elmer Ghostkeeper, MA  
November 26, 2000

## **THE ABORIGINAL DIABETES WELLNESS PROGRAM**

In 1994, the Capital Health Authority in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada established an Aboriginal Wisdom Committee to represent views and provide guidance on health and wellness issues affecting Aboriginal people. The committee acts as an advisory body to Capital Health regarding a range of health care programs and services. The Aboriginal Wisdom Committee identified diabetes mellitus as a major disease affecting Aboriginal people and recommended that a program be established to provide a service for Aboriginal people afflicted with the disease.

The western medical approach to the treatment and management of diabetes does not typically meet the needs of Aboriginal people because of worldview differences on spirituality, traditional medicine, diet, lifestyle and acceptance. The provision of diabetes treatment and management programs within Aboriginal communities is viewed as difficult at the best of times and sometimes nonexistent. Generally speaking, medical services are inaccessible to a predominantly rural Aboriginal population resulting in low attendance in western outreach diabetes programs. Therefore, the Aboriginal Wisdom Committee recommended a positive holistic approach with a strong emphasis on the wellness of the aspects of mind, spirit, emotion, and body to redress the shortcomings of existing programs. The result has been more positive health outcomes for Aboriginal people with diabetes.

To begin an operational coordinator was hired and assigned to coordinate the project. A steering committee comprised of members of the Aboriginal Wisdom Committee and Capital Health medical professionals was formed. The mandate of this steering committee was to ensure that program development would satisfy the unique needs of Aboriginal people and that necessary Capital Health operating requirements with human resources and spacing was met.

As well, a working subgroup of the Aboriginal Wisdom Committee was formed. Their mandate is to ensure that proposed programs promote the partnership of Aboriginal and Western medical and healing models by working with holistic wellness and health concepts. The subgroup included three Aboriginal wise people from the Aboriginal Wisdom Committee, a program planner and the operational coordinator of the program. The outcome of this planning process was the development of the Aboriginal Diabetes Wellness Program primarily designed by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people applying WECHE Teachings©.

The first challenge was to view the diabetes mellitus puzzle using Aboriginal wisdom. The Aboriginal wisdom belief of Neyo Yaw teaches that happy and healthy people are living in a state of harmony. The lesson they have learned is by balancing and sustaining their four bodies and to the extent they are successful at this challenge they become at ease. Neyo Yaw also teaches that if a person does not live in a state of harmony it is because one or more of their bodies have become stressed. This creates a state of imbalance or ill at ease. If a person continues to live in this state of imbalance of Neyo Yaw it can create a sickness to appear.

Aboriginal wise people believe eating too much sugar can leave people with a sick tired feeling. They have named this tired feeling the sugar disease and in my Bushland Cree language Sewinikun Akhosiwin. The belief is that a person's pancreas Opiyakasow and the liver Miskwan help in creating a person's life force Matisowin and when working properly a person feels at rest and well. They know eating too much sugar impairs the pancreas and liver. This is the reason for the tired feeling.

Aboriginal peoples' traditional way of life has undergone a tremendous change during the last thirty years from a bush lifestyle to an industrial lifestyle. The bushland lifestyle worldview of Neyo Yaw includes ceremonies, rituals, sacrifices, hunting, fishing, gathering and trapping. This required Aboriginal people to be highly active in making a living. Their traditional diet of wild meat, fish, berries and herbs was highly nutritious and contained small amounts of fat, sugar and salt that sustained Neyo Yaw. Thus they considered themselves to be happy and healthy. As industrialization spread, the English language and Christianity moved into Aboriginal communities; an industrial lifestyle began to emerge and to repress Aboriginal wisdom and traditionalism.

The western industrial age brought the need for money and technology in the forms of electricity, natural gas, automobile, telephone, the television and western food with high contents of fat, sugar and salt. With access to technology, industrial employment and unemployment, a sedentary lifestyle, the fear of not

having sufficient money to survive created new stresses on the bushland lifestyle and I believe the disease of diabetes mellitus.

The second challenge was to view the diabetes mellitus puzzle using western scientific knowledge. Existing diabetes metabolic clinics were researched. The focus of these treatment and management centers was primarily on the physical aspect of a person. Diabetes in Latin means to siphon and mellitus means melon water. Apparently a Greek physician concluded that the kidneys were attempting to siphon off excessive sugar water from the body that was causing the urine to have a sweet smell and the source of illness. The disease today is referred to as diabetes mellitus. Modern science has now quantified and confirmed that the pancreas gland makes a substance called insulin. It is believed insulin assists the liver to metabolize sugar or glucose for cell energy. Glucose comes from the food one eats. Sometimes the pancreas becomes sick and has a decreased ability to create insulin and effects the body. When the body is insulin dependent this is known as Type I diabetes. When the body is non-insulin dependent this is known as Type II diabetes. In both cases your body does not get enough fuel it requires to work properly. The degree of symptoms will vary depending on the amount of sugar in the blood.

Early signs of a person with diabetes include the physical symptoms of polydipsia, polyuria, dehydration and fatigue. Severe signs include decreased resistance to infection, vision impairments, pins and needles and sexual dysfunction. Extreme signs are dizziness, headache, seizure, coma and death. Diabetes should be tested for at this point. The plasma glucose tolerance test is administered on two different occasions and the amount of glucose in a person's blood is measured on a scale ranging from 0 to 25. If the test results indicate the blood sugar level is below 4 then the person has low blood sugar, above 7 indicates high blood sugar and between 4 and 7 indicates normal blood sugar. Once a person is confirmed to have diabetes then they must monitor daily their blood glucose levels and begin to change their lifestyle.

The western lifestyle of convenience, fast foods and being sedentary have put major stresses on the human body. The risk factors of diabetes Type II happens most often in people who are overweight, have unhealthy eating habits, are not physically active, have a family member with diabetes, are Aboriginal, delivered a baby more than ten pounds and have high blood pressure and high cholesterol. The medical remedies for dealing with the effects of diabetes is prescribing a variety of pharmaceutical medicines and a change in lifestyle.

## **SUMMARY**

Once the diabetes mellitus puzzle was analyzed by both belief systems into a unified whole it formed the model to develop the program using WECHÉ Teachings©. The Aboriginal Diabetes Wellness Program was developed using the partnership of Aboriginal wisdom and Western Scientific Knowledge. The program format is a four-day intake with the option of returning for a three-day refresher after six months. Clients come to live in residence at an Aboriginal Wellness Center on a Monday afternoon and leave at noon on Friday. The focus is on achieving wellness by attending talking, sharing and teaching circles on diabetes management. The more clients understand and know about diabetes the more they become self-empowered to accept, control and learn to live with the disease.

The heart of the program is the emotional and spiritual ceremonies and rituals that begin on Tuesday morning with a sacred pipe, smudging for purification and prayer. These activities create the context for the day. Management and knowledge about diabetes and it's many complications are provided by Aboriginal and western health care professionals including two registered nurses, a registered dietician and three Medical Physicians. Aboriginal wisdom is provided by three to four Aboriginal wise people through their many teachings and lessons on life. These include the Seven Grandfathers; Why People Become Sick; the Five Little Devils; Responsibilities, Resentment and Worry Creating Illness; the meaning of Prayer and Spirituality and sustaining Neyo Yaw by creating a Life Map for Living with Diabetes. Clients are also encouraged to bring along a support person because diabetes not only effects the individual but their family and community as well.

In 1999, the program underwent an evaluation study conducted by a Medical Research Scientist and an Aboriginal Student from the University of Alberta, Canada. The study concluded that after six months there had been a significant improvement in the blood glucose levels and an increase in sense of well-being of Neyo Yaw by Aboriginal people attending the program. In 2000, the Aboriginal Diabetes Wellness Program team was a recipient of the Capital Health 2000 Reach Award for excellence in client service. The program is considered to be innovative, holistic and on the cutting edge of achieving wellness for Aboriginal people afflicted with the diabetes mellitus puzzle.

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**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
MÉTIS CENTRE**



**Métis Health Policy Forum  
Session 9: Importance of Culture for Health and Wellness  
Saturday, April 6, 2002 at 2:30 PM**

**Speaker:** Leah Dorion, Gabriel Dumont Institute of Métis Studies and Applied Research

This session will discuss ways to include Métis cultural content and materials into existing health programs and services. Information will be provided about how the Gabriel Dumont Institute has incorporated Métis content into its programs and services for over twenty years.

**Speaker:** Lorraine Freeman, Métis Resource Centre

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**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
MÉTIS CENTRE**



**Métis Health Policy Forum  
Session 10: Health & Wellness Self-Assessment  
Saturday, April 6, 2002 at 2:30 PM**

**Speaker:** Dr. John Fryters

Every movement is driven by something. This does not exclude the “health and wellness” movement.

Tradition, finances, programs, politics personalities, events, language, etc. can each be a controlling force in any movement.

In order for any movement to be healthy, it must become a vision-driven movement.

This session will explore the past motivations of participants and guide them to re-evaluate personal vision or purpose to be injected in a renewed movement not driven by any one individual but rather by the community as a whole. Such vision-driven movement will shift the focus away from movement building programs to emphasizing a people-building process.

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