



Video - NCCIH anniversary event – Summary

Description

On May 7, 2025, the NCCIH hosted a 20-year anniversary celebration recognizing two decades of research, collaboration, and knowledge translation to support Indigenous health in Canada. The event, which took place at the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George, BC, brought together current and past leaders, committee members, NCC staff and community partners, and organization representatives who have supported and continue to share in the NCCIH's vision of optimal health and well-being for First Nations people, Inuit, and Métis people through health structures and healthcare systems that are culturally responsive to and informed by Indigenous Peoples and communities.

Transcript

Elder Darlene McIntosh: Today we gather to celebrate a milestone: 20 years of the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health.

We recognize and honor the work that uplifts the voices, wisdom and wellness of the Indigenous people of our lands.

The NCCIH's commitment to community-driven, culturally-grounded research aligns with our own ways of knowing, sharing and caring for generations to come.

May we continue to hold strong the blessings of the Creator for our land, our stories, our families.

[Kbast'an Drummers performance]

Warner Adam: In my tradition, when you bring the drum into the room, it's an invitation for our ancestors to come in and to celebrate with us, and to protect who it is that we are and protect our knowledge and our way of life. So, I thank the drummers as well.

What is knowledge? How do we use knowledge? And how do we transfer knowledge so that the subject that we are transferring is clearly articulated and understood in the eyes and ears of the beholder? Many times, our knowledge has been stolen. It hasn't been translated properly. And through the creation of the Centre - it provides policymakers, it provides the partners with knowledge that comes directly from the academic, from Indigenous communities. And for that I really applaud the work that the staff has been doing, particularly Dr. Margo Greenwood. Now the Senator. Congratulations Senator.



And of course, the gift of sharing, ensuring that everybody is properly provided for in terms of knowledge in the mind, body, spirit and soul. And of course, love: ensuring that we love one another, loving humankind and loving the earth and nature are all the teachings. And I believe that the Institute has really embraced these principles in drafting its documents to educate not only policymakers, but the public in general.

So also, I would like to acknowledge Margo Greenwood. As I said she put her sweat and tears in creating this 20 years ago. Margo in our tradition, I'd like to blanket you. And the blanket symbolizes a cloak for protection.

Dr. Margo Greenwood: I wanted to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis people across this country. I wanted to do that by lifting up their voices, because in universities our voices were not heard often. And I wanted to use this Centre to lift them up. And we did that. We all did that.

And the third thing is, I wanted First Nations, Inuit and Métis people to be proud and to know that this Centre belonged to them. It wasn't to me or anybody else. It was theirs. And I hope we reflected that. I know we've reflected that. And it's all of us who did. It wasn't just me, it wasn't just a team. It was everybody who wrote for us, who supported us, who came to dialogue circles, who came to conferences. They did it. You did it. Everybody did it. So, thank you again so much for this honour. Hi, hi!

Warner Adam: It was also with great pleasure to welcome Dr. Terri Aldred to NCCIH. She was on the committee but decided that she would put her name in for the Lead. So, Dr. Aldred, you're in good company. You have us old people that have been around for over 20 years and could provide knowledge and wisdom, because now we're wise!

But I'd like to blanket you as well on behalf of NCCIH to make sure that your mind, your spirit, your body, your heart is protected in doing this work as well as the other work that God has bestowed on you.

Dr. Terri Aldred: I'm somebody who grew up with lived in living experience. And I grew up in a position where I had very little privilege. And of course, now I'm in a position where I carry a lot of privilege and power, and I feel like it's very important for me to always recognize that, and to look for ways to reduce power imbalances and to use both the unearned and earned power and privilege that I have to make the healthcare system more equitable to ensure that there's justice for those who need it.

And so when I think about a vision, and especially in a time where you know, there's more division, more hate, I would say, and more targeting of some of our communities with our various intersectionalities – then my commitment is to say, is that our focus on our work will be going to serve our communities that are the most remote, that are the most oppressed, the ones that are the



least safe, first. And we're going to ensure that they're wrapped in blankets and protection first. Because when we serve them first, it actually benefits all of us.

Julie Daum: So now we have some online greetings from NCCIH friends across Canada.

Madeleine Dion Stout / Kētēskwew: NCCIH was an act of bringing Indigenous people, communities and nations home - journeying us on to a collective lodge.

[Cree] Why the NCCIH Is important: It's focused on *[Cree]*, proving the ability for breaking barriers down and for forging ahead.

This art was accomplished by founders like Senator Margo Greenwood; grounders like Albert Marshall, Don Fiddler, Dr. Tom Dignan, and many other Advisory Committee members – and the pounders, like Donna Atkinson and Sarah de Leeuw and other staff. They worked tirelessly to produce useful health and well-being documents to communicate findings for dispensation far and wide.

This 20-year celebration is a time for triumphant outcries of victory *[Cree]* over poverties and pathologies of all kinds that plague Indigenous peoples, communities, and Nations.

Marilee Nowgesic: We at the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association celebrate, congratulate, honour, and respect the work that NCCIH has done for all First Nations and Inuit and Métis people.

We are truly glad and we appreciate the opportunity to have worked with the Collaborating Centre over the past few years, and to have looked at what we are able to contribute in an authentic, meaningful, and engaging way.

Michael Bird: You've always been a bright light in my book, but it's even more important that good things - if we are encountering the roadblocks here and obstacles, it's really critical for the folks in Canada to offer some hope and to do good and do well, because we're going to be drawing on that as well, and it is a mutual exchange.

Marjolaine Sioui: Well, I would like to congratulate the Collaborating Centre. I had the opportunity to meet some extraordinary people. Unfortunately, there are some who have left us for the spirit world, but it has always been a place for learning, a place of exchanging ideas, for nurturing the mind, I think. And I really wish them to keep up the good work, and many, many years to become this source of inspiration for generations to come. So, congratulations.

Geoff Payne: We talk about the Collaborating Centre as an entity here at UNBC [University of Northern British Columbia], but really what it is - it's a collection of dedicated people that saw the



light, saw the opportunity. Had a vision - not unlike how UNBC came to be - to really do something meaningful, powerful, and impactful. So, I just want to send my heartfelt congratulations to all those that have been involved over the 20 years of the Collaborating Centre, and really looking forward to seeing what happens next.

Sarah Hunt / Tłaliłila'ogwa: I think NCCIH is important because Indigenous people's lives have been framed through lenses that are not our own for so long. So how our health is understood, how well-being is understood, how our needs and realities are understood, has for so long been determined through frameworks that are introduced by others.

And so, I think at the national level and at the local level, having Indigenous perspectives on our health determinants, the priorities, the needs, the approaches - I think is an essential part of our self-determination and our ability to shift and transform the lenses that have been introduced by others. So, I think that a centre like NCCIH really powerfully provides a space for all of us who are concerned about our health and well-being, about our future, [and] the current state of our communities and families, to come together and to kind of put our minds together and to take up those issues in a collective way.

Marjolaine Sioui: The important thing about this work is precisely its mission to work with primarily Indigenous peoples to influence public policy, to influence the work of governments, to help them better understand the realities, as well as the diversity that there can be among our peoples and among different territories.

Marilee Nowgesic: Let's look at NCCIH. In 500 years. What will that look like? And what we're saying is, we've laid the path. We've opened up the gates and laid the foundation for next generations that we won't be able to see. But we know that we have left them this enormous amount of content work – publications and research that will benefit them in being able to address Indigenous health and address Indigenous value sets.

Sarah Hunt / Tłaliłila'ogwa: NCCIH works with such an incredible network of researchers, of medical professionals, service providers, community leaders – locally and nationally and internationally. So, having more opportunity to grow those networks, and also especially to come together and hear and listen to each other, I think is really key. Because we so often as Indigenous scholars, researchers, educators, we're often responding externally to kind of societal changes, government priorities, that kind of thing. And so really having opportunities to turn towards each other to speak to each other, learn from each other. I think that's part of what I'm excited about, I guess.

Michael Bird: We really need to be supporting each other and pulling each other along, and not view our own folks as competition. Because the world we live in - I know here in the U.S. - is a very competitive environment, and inherently it's easy for university programs to compete for stature, for



resources, for faculty. You know that some of that - if we're not careful - can divide us versus unite us.

And if we're clear on our purpose then I think we can see through some of that. We all need to just be kind to each other. We need to be supportive of each other. We need to be honest with each other. And the more we can do that, the more success we'll have, not just for the individual but for our entire community.

Madeleine Dion Stout: *[speaks in Cree]* To advise the next generation of public health researchers, practitioners, and decision makers, there is a need to be mindful of continuing to be influencers.

There are at least four quadrants to consider going forward. One, always seeing something of worth by using our imagination. *[Cree]*

Two, recognizing something old is essential. It is new again. *[Cree]* And it's better known as 'tradition' in English, that is.

Three, being mindful of innovation. *[Cree]* Homegrown and transformative activities or positions.

Last but not least, keeping *[Cree]* good turns from changing fortunes, front and center.

Geoff Payne: You know, sometimes we get caught up in the day-to-day of what we're doing. And I've been a firm believer always that, you know, we all have our own unique strengths but collectively and collaboratively we can do things that individually we'd not be able to do. And I think the Collaborating Centre has - over the past 20 years - shown the ability to be a convener, a pusher of boundaries, to really make sure that the research goes beyond the four walls of the academy and out in the community. So, I challenge the next generation to continue to learn.

Elder Darlene McIntosh: Thank you for your participation in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the National Collaborating Centre of Indigenous Health.

As we go forward in a new light of understanding of how we can support our Aboriginal communities, our precious Elders, our children, may the participants take what is needed, bringing the knowledge received back to their communities.

And may you leave with inspiration, excitement, understanding, patience, and enthusiasm, ready to embark on a new journey, enhancing what the NCCIH does best.

May you journey home with peace and tranquility, and may tomorrow be a good day.

Creator, hear our prayers. Creator, hear our prayers. All my relations. Thank you.



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© 2025 The National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH). This publication was funded by the NCCIH and made possible through a financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of PHAC.