



## NAHO SHARES KNOWLEDGE ACROSS THE GLOBE

By the Policy and Communications Unit

To help strengthen its efforts to protect traditional healing practices in Canada, the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) has begun to look more closely at the activities being undertaken by other Indigenous groups outside the country.

Throughout its first five-year mandate, NAHO fostered a number of relationships with international partners and Indigenous Peoples around the world. These connections have allowed the organization to build upon its already extensive body of knowledge related to Indigenous health and to share this knowledge with Aboriginal communities across Canada.

“Many of the concerns and issues raised by Indigenous Peoples throughout the world are shared by our communities and nations,” said James Lamouche, a research officer within NAHO’s Policy and Communications Unit. “Our interest is in how this information can be shared with our communities to protect and promote the use of traditional healing practices.”

As a veteran research officer at NAHO, Lamouche oversees many of the organization’s activities related to the protection of traditional healing practices. His work has taken him to Indigenous communities in Asia, North America and South America, where he has learned about the unique practices and healing methods of several distinct Indigenous groups, as well as how these groups protect and promote their methods.

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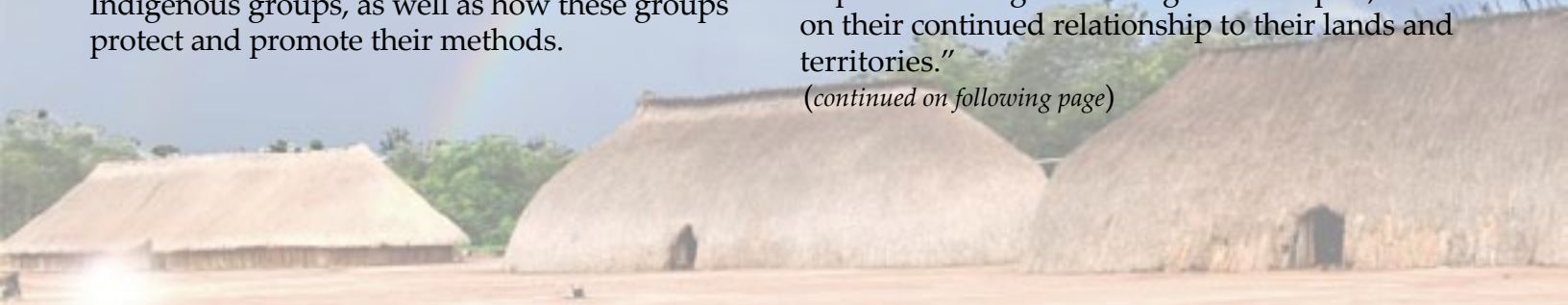
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“Currently, there are many innovative and creative actions being taken by communities throughout the world to protect their traditional knowledge. There are opportunities to learn from each other and to promote responses and solutions that are culturally connected, spiritually grounded, and sustainable within our communities.” Lamouche said.

“Our communities also need to be aware of the activities of governments and international organizations. Many of the decisions taken at the international level have, and will have, an impact on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and on their continued relationship to their lands and territories.”

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As part of its ongoing activities, NAHO regularly monitors international forums—such as the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues—to keep abreast of policies and developments on the international stage that will have an impact on the health of Aboriginal Peoples.

Later this year, the unit will release three reports related to its international work. The first, entitled *International Models for Training and Recognition of Traditional Healing Practices*, provides an overview of some established training models for traditional healing practices around the world. The second, *The Haudenosaunee Code of Behaviour for Traditional Medicine Healers*, examined both the healings practices of international communities as well as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy in an effort to establish a model strategy to protect and promote traditional healing practices that

other communities may utilize. Last but not least, the unit is currently drafting an overview of the international forums that impact the protection and promotion of traditional healing practices.

The connections that NAHO has made with Indigenous groups all over the world led to the organization's involvement in several international gatherings in 2006, including the below events:

### **Joint presentation at the Knowledge Translation Summit in Regina, Saskatchewan, March 4, 2006.**

In partnership with the Amazon Conservation Team (ACT) and the Indigenous Studies Program at McMaster University, NAHO delivered a presentation at the Knowledge Translation Summit in Regina, Saskatchewan. Subtitled *Sharing What We Know About Living a Good Life*, the summit provided an opportunity for NAHO and its partner organizations to showcase their work protecting and promoting Indigenous knowledge and traditional healing practices.

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NAHO research officer James Lamouche (fourth from left) at a March 2006 gathering of traditional healers in the Xingu Indigenous Reserve, Brazil. Participants included members of the Siona, Kofan, Tiro, Nehiyaw, Anishnaabe, Kamsa, Mohawk, Lakota, Ingano, Onondaga and Waura.



The Waura community is one of 14 situated in the Xingu Indigenous Reserve, Matto Grosso State, Brazil.

A letter of intent was signed between the three organizations in 2005. In it, all three committed to working together with Elders and healers to, among other things, highlight the work of the Amazon Conservation Team and its Shamans and Apprentices Program; host an exchange between the Union of Yagé Healers from Colombia and Aboriginal communities in Canada; and, report on the outcomes of the International Indigenous Elders Summit 2004. Progress is currently being made on all of these fronts.

### **Gathering of Traditional Healers in the Amazon, March 27 to 31, 2006.**

In March of that same year, the Amazon Conservation Team convened a gathering of traditional healers in the Xingu Indigenous

Reserve in Brazil's southern Amazon, inviting representatives from NAHO, the Union of Yagé Healers (Colombia) and the Indigenous Elders and Youth Council (IEYC), as well as other Indigenous groups in North and South America. NAHO assisted with the participation of IEYC members, as well as providing logistical support to the ceremonies and meetings in the Xingu. The gathering was an opportunity for participants to engage other Indigenous communities in ceremony and dialogue. Indigenous healers and Elders discussed their experiences dealing with the encroachment and degradation of their lands as well as some of the responses that have been, or could be, used by Indigenous communities to protect their culture, ecosystems and traditional medicines and healing practices.

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### **Canada–Mexico Workshop on Indigenous Health, Mérida, Mexico, May 7 to 9, 2006.**

The ministries of health in Canada and Mexico agreed to co-host a gathering of ministerial representatives, non-governmental organizations and Indigenous representatives to discuss the health of Indigenous Peoples in both countries.

The workshop was an opportunity to share experiences and to highlight activities and issues from each country's perspective. NAHO received an invitation to participate in two capacities: to provide an overview of the health issues and outcomes within an Aboriginal context in Canada, and to provide a report on NAHO activities and initiatives related to the protection and promotion of traditional healing practices. During the workshop, NAHO representatives were also able to visit a Mayan community health centre and meet with a Mayan traditional healer.

### **Indigenous Cooperative on the Environment (ICE) International Gathering, New York, USA, October 18, 2006.**

In October of last year, an international gathering of Indigenous Peoples was organized in New

York by the Indigenous Cooperative on the Environment (ICE), a collective of Indigenous organizations focused on environmental issues. NAHO received an invitation to participate in this gathering due to its work with Elders in the IEYC, who believe that the fight to preserve traditional healing practices and medicines must confront broader issues of land and the environment. From these Elders' perspective, health, traditional healing and medicines do not simply overlap with environmental issues, they are fundamentally entwined with them and cannot be addressed separately. NAHO facilitated the participation of Elders in the gathering and consulted with the ICE on their work in the international arena with respect to Indigenous knowledge, traditional healing and the environment.

Please contact James Lamouche at [jlamouche@naho.ca](mailto:jlamouche@naho.ca) for more information on any of these gatherings or on future activities in the international arena.



**Chelsea Lavallée**  
2006/2007 Role Model

### **Nominations are being accepted for the 2007 National Aboriginal Role Model Program.**

The National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) is looking for Canada's top Aboriginal youth (between the ages of 13 and 30) who are positive role models to others. Role models are First Nations, Inuit or Métis who have shown leadership in school, in sports, or in their communities.

**The nomination deadline is  
April 2, 2007.**

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL  
**Role Model**  
PROGRAM

For nomination forms or further information, please visit: [www.naho.ca/rolemodel](http://www.naho.ca/rolemodel) or call 1-877-602-4445

## INUIT DISCUSS ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH CONCERNS WITH CIRCUMPOLAR COUNTRIES



By The Ajunnginiq Centre

The Ajunnginiq (Inuit) Centre at the National Aboriginal Health Organization is working more closely with international organizations to protect and promote Inuit health and traditions, all the while expanding its growing network of contacts spanning the circumpolar world.

This past summer, the Ajunnginiq Centre was invited to attend the Inuit Circumpolar Conference's 10th General Assembly, a major gathering of Inuit from circumpolar countries. Topping the agenda at this year's gathering were several issues of importance to Inuit at the community level, including health and wellness, protecting Inuit traditions and sustaining the environment.

The Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) is an international organization representing approximately 150,000 Inuit living in the northern regions of Canada, Greenland, Alaska, and Chukotka, Russia. The 10th General

Assembly, held in Barrow, Alaska in July, brought together Inuit delegations from Canada, Russia, Greenland, and Alaska. Held every four years, the assemblies are important opportunities for Inuit leaders of the circumpolar world to discuss common issues.

The Ajunnginiq Centre works closely with the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (Canada) on circumpolar health concerns and priorities, as well as issues related to the protection of Inuit traditional knowledge and practices.

"The Ajunnginiq Centre was fortunate to be invited to participate in such an important event," said Tracy O'Hearn, director of the Ajunnginiq Centre. "The work we have been doing on protecting Inuit traditional healing ties in with the work that is being done by the national and international Inuit organizations. Because of this, we are being asked to participate in these events to provide information and find  
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**"THE WORK WE HAVE BEEN DOING ON PROTECTING INUIT TRADITIONAL HEALING TIES IN WITH THE WORK THAT IS BEING DONE BY THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INUIT ORGANIZATIONS."**

Tracy O'Hearn, Director of the Ajunnginiq Centre

ways to work together to help protect Inuit traditions and healing practices, preserve the environment and promote health.”

At the ICC’s general assembly, the Ajunnginiq Centre participated in a panel discussion focusing on the United Nations’ Convention on Biological Diversity and its importance to Inuit. The Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty that was enacted in 1992 to counter widespread environmental destruction and the loss of species and ecosystems worldwide. The convention’s three main goals are: the conservation of biological diversity (or biodiversity), sustainable use of the components of biodiversity, and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits that arise from genetic resources.

Other speakers on the panel included Violet Ford, vice-president of international affairs for ICC (Canada) and Brendan Tobin of the United Nations University. Together, the three provided an overview of the Convention on Biological Diversity for an audience of Inuit from across the circumpolar world. The panelists also discussed how Inuit in Canada have been working to protect cultural and intellectual property (including traditional medicines and healing practices) and how some parts of Inuit customary law could be developed to further these initiatives.

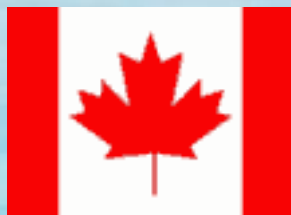
An important result of the general assembly was the “Utqiagvik Declaration,” which established

priorities for ICC in the coming four-year period on areas such as the environment, traditional and cultural property and the Inuit language. Of particular interest to work of the Ajunnginiq Centre are the sections of the Utqiagvik Declaration focusing on health and wellness.

In one section, the authors of the declaration, “Instruct ICC, in cooperation with national and circumpolar partners, to develop a Circumpolar Inuit Health Action Plan that clearly identifies the health issues, priorities, and mechanisms in which Inuit health priorities can be advanced; and Further Instruct ICC, in co-operation with national and circumpolar partners, to insist that Arctic governments support healthy communities’ initiatives.”

The ICC’s general assembly also hosted the first circumpolar Inuit workshop on human health priorities. The health workshop provided an opportunity for each of the four circumpolar countries to begin identifying priority issues and to learn from each other about actions taken by organizations in other circumpolar countries. At the workshop, the Ajunnginiq Centre presented packages containing the various health resources produced by the centre since its creation.

Learn more about ICC (Canada) and ICC international by visiting their respective Web sites at [www.inuitcircumpolar.com](http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com) and [www.inuit.org](http://www.inuit.org).



## FIRST NATIONS CENTRE CREATES ANNUAL GATHERING OF TRADITIONAL HEALING ELDERS

By The First Nations Centre

The First Nations Centre (FNC) at the National Aboriginal Health Organization has spearheaded a new initiative aimed at bringing together Elders from across Canada to share information about traditional health and healing practices.

Entitled The First Nations Centre Circle of Traditional Healing Elders, the new forum will convene annually to discuss a range of topics related to traditional health and healing, including medicines, ceremonies, protocols, traditional healing networks, and more.

“The circle is an attempt to ensure that the voices of our Elders, traditional healers and medicine people continue to be heard and that our medicinal knowledge continues to be passed on and protected,” said Sonia Isaac-Mann, director of the First Nations Centre.

“One way this can be accomplished is by providing a recurring forum for Elders from various regions to come together to share and exchange information regarding traditional medicine, health and healing.”

The first Circle of Traditional Healing Elders was convened in September 2006 at the Gathering of the Nations, a week long traditional gathering in the Mi'kmaq community of Elsipogtog, N.B. Several Elders and traditional healers from Elsipogtog, as well as from communities across Canada, were in attendance.

Following the success of this inaugural gathering, the circle was made into an annual event to be held in a different community each year. In order to maintain a “grassroots” and community-based approach to the protection of traditional knowledge, the event will always be held within a First Nations community. While the location of the next circle is yet to be determined, it is being planned for sometime in late 2007.

At the end of this fiscal year, the FNC will release a report on the 2006 Circle of Traditional Healing Elders, which will be used to guide the FNC's activities in the area of traditional knowledge.

“The FNC looks forward to strengthening this very important initiative in the coming years,” said Isaac-Mann.

## ONKWA'NISTENHSERA DOCUMENTARY PREMIERES AT THE CANADIAN ABORIGINAL FESTIVAL

A documentary chronicling the struggles of Indigenous women to reclaim the knowledge of their foremothers and to end violence against women premiered at the Canadian Aboriginal Festival in Toronto this past November.

*Onkwa'nistenhsera: Mothers of Our Nations* is a 48-minute DVD directed by Dr. Dawn Martin-Hill on behalf of the Indigenous Elders and Youth Council. It records some of the events that took place during the Indigenous Elders Summit held at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in 2004, where Elders developed declarations on topics ranging from education to traditional laws to violence against women.

One of the declarations, entitled *Women Give Life*, states, "Violence against Indigenous women must cease. Women are the mothers of our nations and their authority must be recognized within and outside Indigenous nations."

*Onkwa'nistenhsera* examines the need for Indigenous women to reclaim, restore and revitalize their traditional knowledge, which has become marginalized through centuries of colonialism. In the film, the women strive to create a healthy future for their families through healing processes that engage both individuals and their communities.

The documentary also highlights the plight of the over 500 missing and murdered women in Canada by acknowledging the violence perpetrated against Indigenous women, as

well as some of the efforts to put a stop to this violence, including the Native Women's Association of Canada's Stolen Sisters campaign.

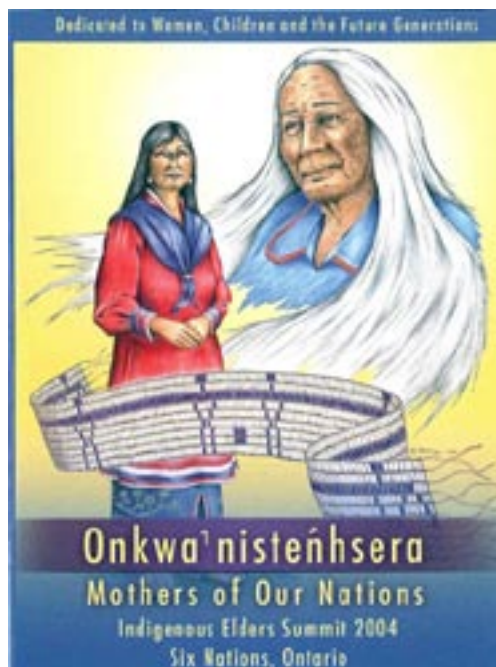
"NAHO is proud to have provided support to the successful hosting of the International Indigenous Elders Summit and the continuing work of the Indigenous Elders and Youth Council," said Acting Chief Executive Officer Carole Lafontaine. "We congratulate the IEYC and Dr. Dawn Martin-Hill on the successful release of the second in the series of documentaries on the International Indigenous Elders Summit."

The Canadian Aboriginal Festival is a major event held annually at the Rogers Centre in Toronto. A key part of the festival is the Traditional Teachings Tent, which this year included the premiere screening of the *Onkwa'nistenhsera* documentary.

Funding for the *Onkwa'nistenhsera* documentary was provided by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres.

Individual and institutional copies of the documentary are available for purchase through:

The Indigenous Health Research  
Development Program  
[www.ihrdp.ca](http://www.ihrdp.ca)  
Six Nations Polytechnic  
Box 700, 2160 Fourth Line Road  
Ohsweken, Ontario



[www.canadian-health-network.ca](http://www.canadian-health-network.ca)

[www.reseau-canadien-sante.ca](http://www.reseau-canadien-sante.ca)

## PROMOTING ABORIGINAL APPROACHES TO HEALTH: RESOURCES FROM THE CANADIAN HEALTH NETWORK

### **Understanding the role of healing in Aboriginal communities**

Defines the concept of Aboriginal healing as applied to crime, victims of crime, and community health in general; describes healing approaches that include offenders as a part of the healing process; and recommends government roles and strategies for supporting healing processes in Aboriginal communities. *Link requires PDF reader.*

Source: [Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada](#) From: [Aboriginal Peoples collection](#)

### **Healing lodges for Aboriginal federal offenders**

Lists healing lodges that have been built to serve the needs of Aboriginal offenders serving federal sentences. Describes how the needs are addressed through Aboriginal teachings and ceremonies, contact with Elders and children, and interaction with nature. Discusses available programs and the goals of each healing lodge.

Source: [Correctional Service Canada \(CSC\)](#) From: [Working together](#)

### **North American Aboriginal healing traditions**

Describes some forms of Aboriginal healing that are available for people living with HIV. Discusses the medicine wheel, healing circles, sweatlodges and other ceremonies. Stresses the need to contact an Elder to begin a healing journey.

Source: [Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange \(CATIE\)](#)

### **Biidaaban: the Mnjikaning community healing model**

Provides a holistic picture of Biidaaban in Mnjikaning First Nation that includes a description of the community, its healing process and pursuit of community alternative justice healing. Includes excerpts from in-depth interviews with community members.

Source: [Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada](#) From: [Aboriginal Peoples collection](#)

### **The road to healing: stopping solvent abuse in Aboriginal communities**

Discusses solvent abuse among Aboriginal youth and suggests reasons for its prevalence in their communities. Describes treatment centres established across Canada, by Health Canada in partnership with First Nations and Inuit people, where the emphasis is placed on holistic healing. Created for the CHN by the affiliates for Substance Use/Addictions/Tobacco and Aboriginal Peoples.

Source: [Canadian Health Network \(CHN\)](#) From: [Partner feature of the month: archives](#)

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### **How do I find out more about 'traditional medicine'?**

Provides information on traditional medicine and explains how to find a traditional Aboriginal healer. Discusses the relationship between conventional medication and traditional healing practices. Prepared by the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO).

Source: [Canadian Health Network \(CHN\)](#) From: [FAQs: Aboriginal Peoples](#)

### **Aboriginal children: the healing power of cultural identity**

Predicts the positive results of fostering a sense of cultural identity. Emphasizes the importance of program development taking place within the actual Aboriginal communities. Lists ways in which parents, caregivers, and health practitioners can provide related support to Aboriginal children. Created for the CHN by the Children's Affiliate.

Source: [Canadian Health Network \(CHN\)](#) From: [Partner feature of the month: archives](#)

### **Research report: applying Inuit cultural approaches in the prevention of family violence and abuse**

Addresses the issues of spousal, sexual, and child abuse in Inuit communities. Explores Inuit traditional values, philosophies, and practices as they pertain to the treatment and healing of both the abused and the abusers. Highlights the best practices for Inuit healers and counsellors. Lists abuse prevention services. *Link requires PDF reader.*

Source: [Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada.](#)



For Métis-specific health information, consult our Web site at [www.naho.ca/metiscentre](http://www.naho.ca/metiscentre)

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# The 2007 NAHO Photography Contest

## Calling all shutter bugs!

Would you like to see a photograph taken by you appear in one of our publications or on our Web site? Would you like the opportunity to win great cash prizes? If so, enter the 2007 NAHO Photography Contest!

We're looking for vibrant images of Aboriginal people in Canada embracing their culture and communities while promoting healthy living. Enter your photograph in one of three categories:

**Aboriginal Healers** (First Nations, Métis and Inuit working in the health field).

**Community Life** (group shots of Aboriginal families or community members).

**Aboriginal Spirit** (traditional dancing, powwows, customs, etc.).



**Deadline for Submissions: May 1 2007**

### TO ENTER:

Send your hard copy photographs, complete with entry forms (taped or glued to the back of the photograph) to:

NAHO 2007 Photography Contest  
220 Laurier Avenue West, Suite 1200  
Ottawa, ON K1R 5Z9

Send your digital images (JPG or TIFF files, 300 DPI, 1MB in size) on a CD to the above address or e-mail them to: [photocontest@naho.ca](mailto:photocontest@naho.ca). Be sure to send a digital entry form, downloadable from our Web site, for each digital image submission.

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

### ELIGIBILITY

Entrants who are not legal age of majority for their province/territory must have a permission letter signed by a parent or guardian.

Directors, employees and contractors of NAHO and their immediate families and cohabitants are not eligible.

Photographs that have been previously published or that have won a photographic award elsewhere are not eligible.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Photograph subjects must be Aboriginal – First Nations, Métis or Inuit.

Please provide a title for your photograph as well as a brief description of who is pictured and what it is they are doing.

Colour or black and white print photographs should be 4 x 6 inches (10 x 15 centimetres) (most common film processing size), matte finish and unmounted. Slides and photocopies will not be accepted.

If submitting a hard copy photograph, attach one fully completed entry form to the back of each photograph submitted. Photocopy the blank entry form and enter as often as you like. The same photograph cannot be submitted into multiple categories.

If submitting a digital image, please ensure that the image file and entry form file share the same title (for example, Title1\_photo.jpeg and Title1\_entryform.pdf). Digital images should be either JPG or TIFF files. Other formats will not be accepted.

### LEGAL

All entered photographs become the property of the National Aboriginal Health Organization and can be used in any of its publications or promotions and educational materials, in print or online, without further compensation or royalties.

Entries will not be returned. This contest is subject to all applicable federal, provincial/territorial and local laws and void where prohibited.

By signing the entry form, you are agreeing to all the rules and regulations listed here.

For a complete list of rules, visit our Web site at [www.naho.ca](http://www.naho.ca).