



Waniska
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Mâmâwihitowin (Gathering of people): Capacity strengthening within HIV research for Indigenous people in Saskatchewan and Manitoba

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HIV/HCV/STBBI in Saskatchewan/Manitoba

HIV: Saskatchewan (SK)/Manitoba (MB) have the highest infection rates in Canada.

- 24.7% of the new cases are Indigenous despite representing only 4.9% of the Canadian population.

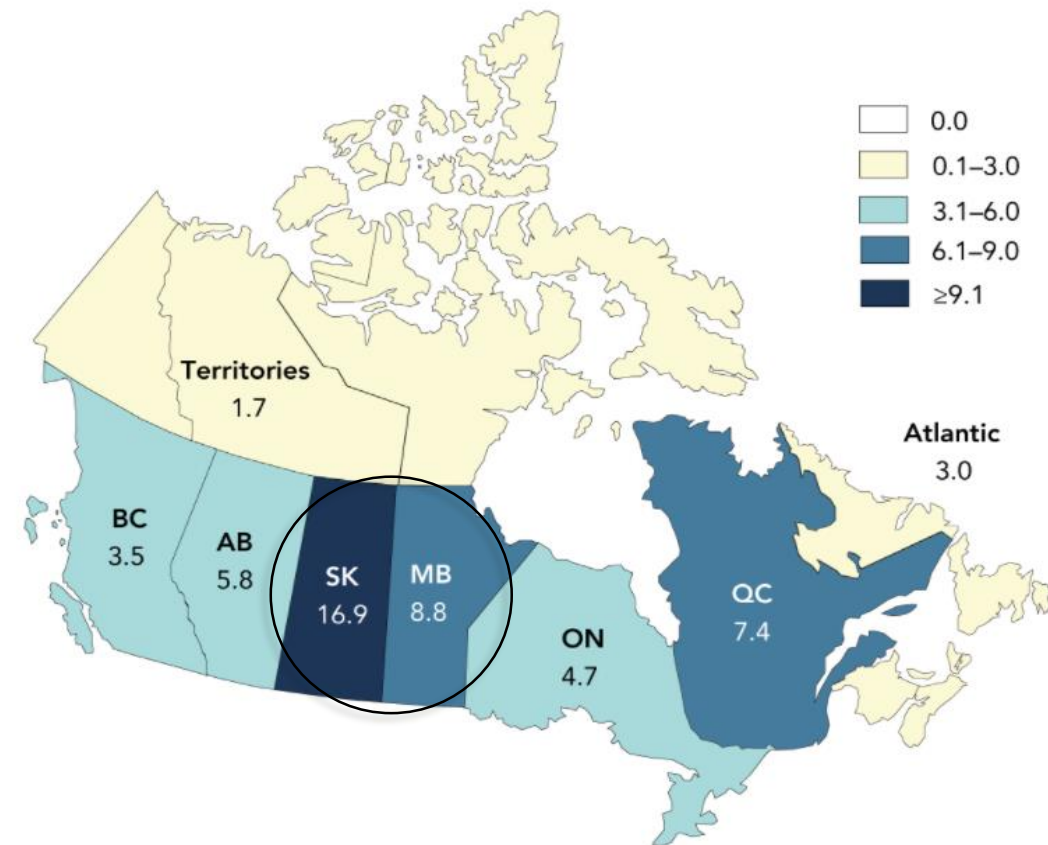
Injection Drug Use (IDU): High rates of HIV and HCV infections have been associated with IDU (Wylie et al., 2006).

- Provincial data in SK shows that IDU was reported by 67% of the new cases; and of those, 89% self-identified as Indigenous (Government of SK, 2017).

Well-meaning researchers and policy makers, with solely Western-based approaches, have not solved the problem. Indigenous people have been left out of the conversation and their voices have not been heard.

Thus, the epidemic continues.

Figure 2: HIV diagnosis rate (per 100,000 population), by province and territory, Canada, 2019 [a](#) [b](#)



Waniska Centre

- The *waniska* Centre takes a proactive, strengths-based approach – our research gets at the root of the causes of inequities and focuses on individual and communal strengths rather than what they may be lacking.
- We also approach research with the concept of **ethical space** in mind – this is the space formed with two societies with disparate worldviews engage with each other in a respectful way.
- Land and culture-based healing – the land serves as an Indigenous health determinant to individual and communal health and wellness. This means that attempts to heal a person from their trauma-induced illness or imbalance cannot be addressed without consideration of their connection to the land and the ways it affect health and wellness.

Approaching projects with an Indigenous concept of wellness while accounting for emotional, mental, spiritual and physical aspects of health



Mâmâwîbitowin Initiative

- *Mâmâwîbitowin* means a “gathering of people.”
 - People with Lived/Living Experience, youth, Elders, Knowledge Holders, community members, community researchers and academics will take part in courses and other learning opportunities.
- Partnering with organizations to create micro-credentialling program.
- Pulling together available courses in the areas of Research Ethics and Practices, Health and Wellness Knowledges and Indigenous and Community Research to assist people to engage in Indigenous research and the sector meaningfully.
 - Examples of courses will include Indigenous/research methods, approaches to peer support, data sovereignty, STBBI and cultural safety courses.
- Creation of a *mâmâwîbitowin* Guiding Circle will guide the formation of the credentialing program in terms of content and other various supports that community researchers need.
- Draw from *mâmâwîbitowin* to create Community Guiding Circles for *waniska*-affiliated research projects to ensure that they will be relevant, effective and culturally responsive for the community



