

2nd World Congress on

Public Health & Nutrition

March 22-23, 2017 | Rome, Italy

(W)HOLISTIC HEALTH: HOW COMMUNITY-BASED, INDIGENOUS POLICYMAKING APPROACHES EFFECTIVELY MEET PUBLIC HEALTH NEEDS

Cassandra J Opikokew Wajuntaha*

*Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, Canada

Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples around the globe have had their own approaches, methodologies, and systems for administering healthcare in their communities based on their own conceptions of health and healthy living. Though it differed from community to community and there is no “pan-Indigenous” approach to healthcare, many Indigenous communities had policymaking processes in place that accounted for gender, age, citizenship, etc. Though Western colonial public health policymaking structures are in place in countries like Canada and the United States, these policies have repeatedly failed to improve the health outcomes of Indigenous people residing in those countries. However, through community-based health interventions built on traditional knowledge, some Indigenous groups have been able to influence the policy process and create their own mechanisms for delivering effective public healthcare to their populations, including the File Hills Qu’Appelle Tribal Council (FHQTC) who owns and operates the All Nations Healing Hospital in Canada, and the Papa Ola Lokahi created by the Native Hawaiians in the United States which provides healthcare and programming throughout the Hawaiian Islands. Using an Indigenous research methodology, this study examines how Indigenous approaches to public health better meet the needs of Indigenous people and hypothesizes about how these approaches could also provide best practices for the administration of public health in general.

Biography

Cassandra is currently a Ph.D. candidate studying Indigenous health and public policy at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy in Regina, SK Canada. She is the recipient of a national Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Doctoral Research Award worth \$108,000 over three years for her dissertation entitled “The Indian Solution to the Policy Problem: Developing an Indigenous Policymaking Model to Address First Nations Health Disparities”. Cassandra is working with Indigenous health organizations in Saskatchewan and Hawaii to examine how self-determined Indigenous health policymaking models are more effective at improving the health of Indigenous people than Western colonial models.

Cassandra.Wajuntah@uregina.ca

Notes: