

# Status Quo is No Longer an Option

Towards a Coalition on Action Against Indigenous Specific Racism in Health Care

## Meet the Speakers



### **Dr. Barry Lavalley**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc.

Dr. Barry Lavalley is a member of the Metis community of St. Laurent, Manitoba and a descendent of Duck Bay and Lake Manitoba First Nations. Education and Experience as a Practitioner.

He received his medical degree in 1988 and completed his training in family medicine in 1990, all at the University of Manitoba. He is a Doctor of Medicine (MD), Certified in the College of Family Physicians (CCFP Canada), a Fellow of the College of Family Physicians (FCFP Canada), and earned a Master of Clinical Sciences Degree in 2004 at Western Ontario University.

Prior to joining Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. as the Medical Advisor (2019) and accepting the position of CEO of Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc. (2020), he practiced general medicine in Winnipeg after 17 years of flying regularly to Tataskweyak First Nation to provide in-community physician services.

He focused his entire career on improving care and outcomes for First Nations and Metis people –as a practicing physician and as an educator, researcher and advocate.

He is the past president of the Indigenous Physicians Association in Canada and worked for ten years in partnership with Indigenous scholars and practitioners from Australia, Te Ora and Native Hawaii. Workforce development, Indigenous data and research figured in this work resulting in many international research and cross-educational collaborations.

As the Indigenous lead of a team tasked with creating an Indigenous specific, anti-racism

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curriculum as a way and means to improve health outcomes –he helped create the curriculum and manuscript which became embedded in medical schools across Canada. The manuscript calls for medical schools to engage locally with students and elders, and then adapt and use the curriculum.

Dr. Lavallee's more recent research activities centered on prevention of chronic kidney disease in First Nations in Manitoba using point of care testing technology. As well, he is principle investigator for a Strategic Patient-Oriented Research-Diabetes grant focusing on the evaluation of an anti-racist curriculum for practicing physicians working with First Nations who live with diabetes.

His current interest clinically is the emergence of chronic diseases in First Nations in Manitoba and understanding the influence of colonialism and Indigenous specific racism as significant causation variables.

When asked about his professional legacy, Dr. Lavallee's humility is apparent, as he is reluctant to share about his many accomplishments. Among them, he has presented to government committees, supported research related to Indigenous peoples, and participated as an expert witness during the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. He remains an advisor to Indigenous medical students and a responsive advocate for First Nations leaders. KIM colleagues have taken notice of how he respects and honours women, as well as traditional healers and knowledge keepers. For five years he was privileged to work side by side at the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg doing 'rounds' with Don Cardinal, the renowned Indigenous leader and healer. This had a profound impact on Dr. Lavallee's life and future work, leading him to want to actively engage and bring together western and Indigenous healing systems.

The CEO role will provide Dr. Lavallee with a challenging and rewarding opportunity, within the context of concurrent health systems transformation sought by First Nations, Manitoba and Canada. With his more than 30 years of hard-earned leadership skills as an Indigenous physician and an educator –he is ready to extend his leadership and his learning yet further to achieve transformative change through collaboration, but that must always benefit the people.

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