



CHIROPRACTIC

## Bringing Nondrug Spine Care to Indigenous Populations

*WORLD SPINE CARE CANADA TACKLES OPIOID USE IN THE PIMICIKAMAK OKIMAWIN NATION*

Editorial Staff | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

While back and neck pain pose challenges worldwide, access to spine care – particularly nondrug, nonsurgical spine care – is more challenging in remote areas; and even more so among Indigenous populations. That includes Cross Lake, Manitoba, Canada, home to the Pimicikamak Okimawin nation, comprising approximately 8,500 members.

Substance abuse has long been a problem for Indigenous people, who "carry a disproportionate burden of the harms related to substance use, including opioids," according to The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health. The potential solution: a new research project and health service in Cross Lake spearheaded by World Spine Care Canada.

According to a WSC press release, the project is designed "to reduce barriers to conservative spine care and minimize opioid exposure" in the Cross Lake Indigenous community" by "[facilitating] access to high-quality, low-cost, non-pharmaceutical, and non-surgical care for low back and neck pain as the first step in a comprehensive spine care model."



The project is funded by Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program (SUAP) – one of 16 harm reduction projects in Indigenous communities funded recently by the SUAP, with funding support from the Canadian Chiropractic Association, the Canadian Chiropractic Research Foundation, and the Skoll Foundation.

The project is part of the Global Spine Care Initiative (GSCI), the scientific arm of World Spine Care. The GSCI's mission: "to bring together leading healthcare providers, scientists, specialists, government agencies, and other stakeholders to transform the delivery of spine care."

"Organisations like World Spine Care Canada make a significant difference in helping Indigenous communities struggling with chronic pain build evidence for the culturally sensitive and trauma-informed health supports they need," said Minister Bennett. "Initiatives like ['Reducing Barriers to Conservative Spine Care to Minimize Opioid Exposure: A Global Spine Care Implementation'] will help improve the quality of life of Indigenous people living with spinal issues and reduce substance use harms in the Cross Lake First Nation Community in Manitoba."

MARCH 2023