



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATAWA HEALTH CO-OPERATIVE ANNOUNCE INAUGURAL CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER DR. REBEKAH NECKOWAY

Thunder Bay, ON – Today Matawa Health Co-operative announced the appointment of its inaugural Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dr. Rebekah (Becky) Neckoway, marking the first time an Indigenous CMO has been appointed in Ontario.

“We’re pleased to welcome Dr. Neckoway as our first Chief Medical Officer,” said Frances Wesley, Executive Director of Matawa Health Co-operative (MHC). “Dr. Neckoway’s leadership and support will be instrumental as we continue to build on and expand our healthcare services within Matawa communities.”

Dr. Neckoway is a First Nations woman from Thunder Bay with roots in Eabametoong First Nation and Fox Lake Cree Nation who has worked with MHC as a physician since 2022. She earned her nursing degree from Lakehead University and attended medical school at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. She graduated from the rural family medicine residency program at the University of Alberta in 2015. She is currently completing a Master of Health Sciences in Health Administration at the University of Toronto.

“My entire medical career has been dedicated to the care of First Nations peoples. I have worked out of the Sioux Lookout region for the majority of my career, serving communities in Treaty 9,” said Dr. Neckoway. “My life and work experiences in rural and remote First Nation communities has given me a strong desire to give back in a good way.”

As CMO, Dr. Neckoway will continue to deliver primary care while also providing leadership for all MHC physicians. Working in collaboration with the Executive Director and the Director of Clinical & Nursing Services, Dr. Neckoway will support physicians in upholding the MHC’s team-based and client-centered care model across all Matawa communities. Dr. Neckoway begins her new role on January 8, 2024.

Established in 2017, the MHC provides healthcare services to achieve long-term health and wellbeing for all members within the nine Matawa First Nations. Within Canada, only one other Indigenous CMO exists (at the [First Nations Health Authority](https://www.fnhc.ca/) in British Columbia beginning in 2014).

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