

# Breaking Barriers for Native Americans Seeking Health Care and Organ Transplants

TODAY'S PRESENTER



**Thomas Wyatt**

MD, FACEP  
Senior Medical Director,  
Emergency Services





**Deanna Fenton**

Senior Manager, Program  
Development and  
Operations



## Need Assistance?

Contact Us via Zoom Chat, or  
[info@organdonationalliance.org](mailto:info@organdonationalliance.org)  
786-866-8730

# Meet Our Moderator



**Nichole Salaam** MA, MSED

Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



# Meet Our Presenter



**Thomas Wyatt**

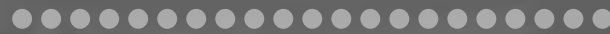
MD, FACEP

Senior Medical Director,  
Emergency Services





# American Indian Historical Trauma & the Link to Health Disparities



**Thomas E. Wyatt, M.D.**

*Senior Medical Director, Hennepin Healthcare  
Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine  
University of Minnesota Medical School*



# Land Acknowledgment

---

The Dakota and Ojibwe people were the primary inhabitants of the land that is present-day Minnesota. In 1820, the U.S. Indian Agency was established at Fort Snelling and Indigenous communities were violently removed from their land. A wave of anti-Indigenous laws and policies followed, starting with the Indian Removal Act. The U.S.-Dakota War occurred in 1862. Elliot Park is situated on violently acquired Dakota land and various industries have been built upon that land, using its vital resources — many of which are sacred to the Dakota people. These industries have since made their owners very wealthy, while leaving Indigenous communities with almost no decision-making power over the land.







Nika Ni Si Mo



Mala kwa com si

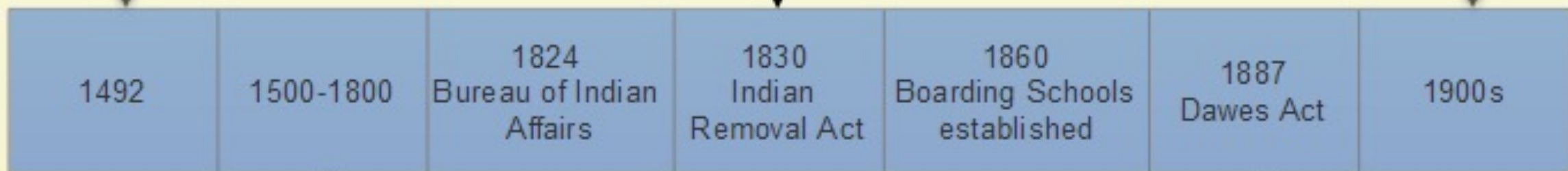
Holay the tah







-More injustice  
-Revival period late  
1960s



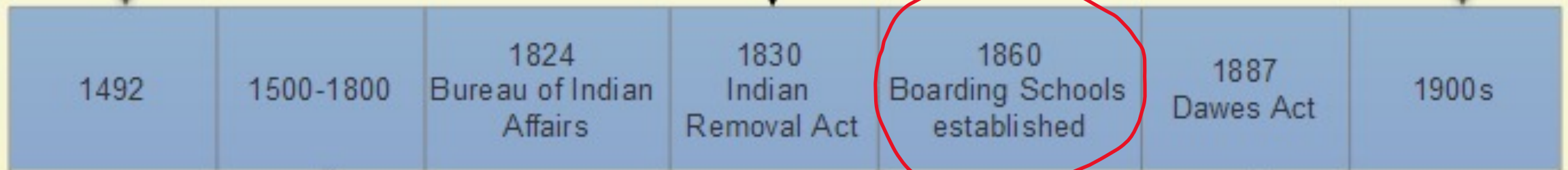
-Wars  
-DISEASE







-More injustice  
-Revival period late  
1960s



-Wars  
-DISEASE





# “Kill the Indian and Save the Man”

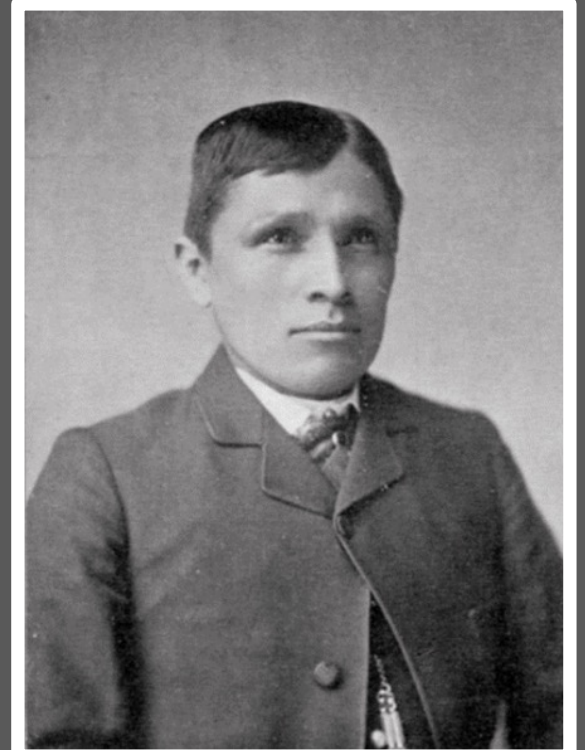
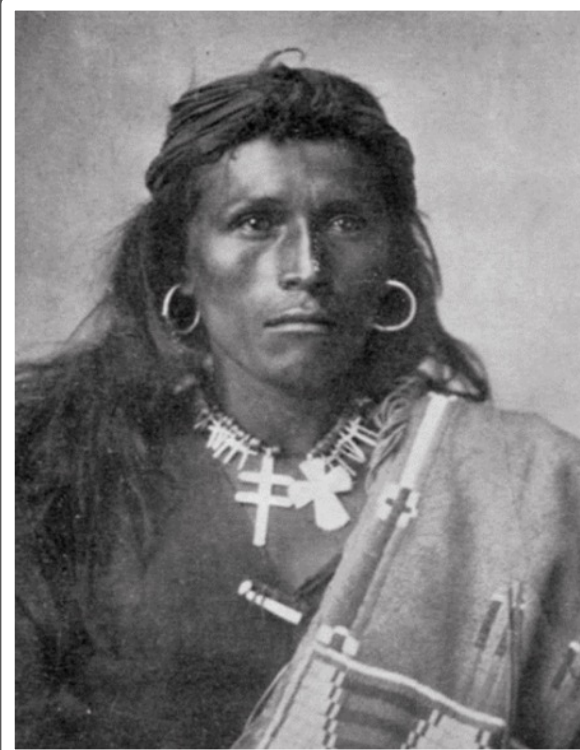
–Captain Richard Henry Pratt

Stated Purpose of BIA Boarding Schools:

“Assimilate American Indian children into the American culture by placing them in institutions where they are forced to reject their own culture.”



Thomas Moore before and after his entrance into the Regina Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan in 1874.  
Library and Archives Canada / NL-022474





"A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead."

*–Captain Richard Henry Pratt*













# 6 Phases of Intergenerational Trauma in American Indian History

1 <sup>st</sup> CONTACT	•sustenance loss (physical/spiritual).
ECONOMIC COMPETITION	•life shock, genocide, no time for grief. Colonization Period: introduction of disease and alcohol, traumatic events such as Wounded Knee Massacre
INVASION/WAR PERIOD	•extermination, refugee symptoms.
SUBJUGATION/ RESERVATION PERIOD	•confined/ trans-located, forced dependency on oppressor, lack of security.
BOARDING SCHOOL PERIOD	• destroyed family system, beatings, rape, prohibition of Native language and religion; Lasting Effect: ill-prepared for parenting, identity confusion.
FORCED RELOCATION AND TERMINATION PERIOD	• transfer to urban areas, prohibition of religious freedom, racism and being viewed as second class; loss of governmental system and community.



# What Does Intergenerational Trauma and Historical Grief Have To Do with *Today*?

- Unresolved emotional trauma
- Depression
- High mortality rates
- Child abuse and domestic violence
- High rates of drug and alcohol abuse



# Adverse Childhood Experiences

Physical abuse

Emotional abuse

Sexual abuse

Physical/emotional neglect

Exposure to domestic violence

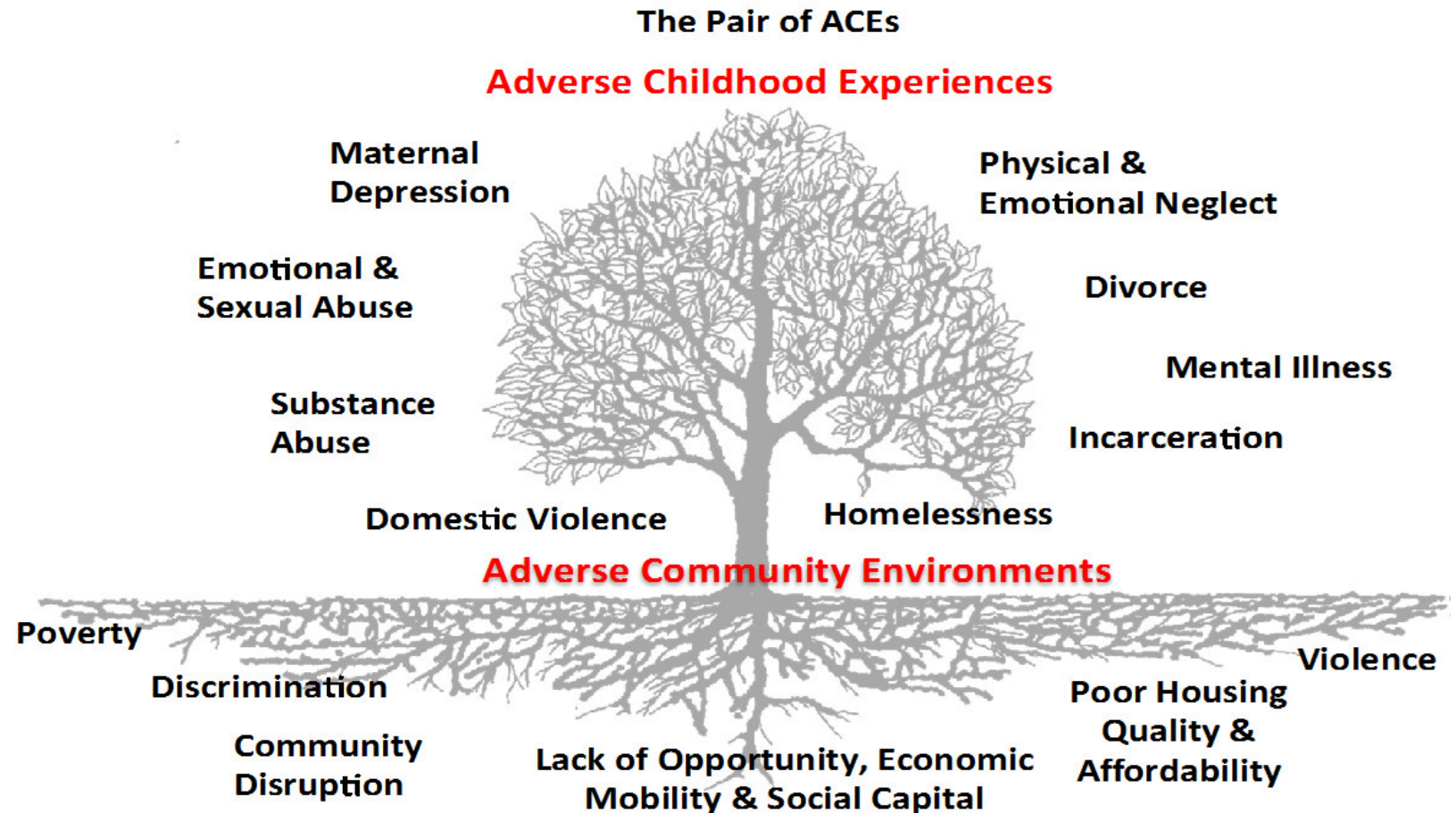
Household mental illness

Household substance abuse

Parental separation/divorce

Incarcerated household member

CDC, 1998





# American Indian Mortality vs. all other U.S. races

Chronic liver disease (4.6x)

Diabetes Mellitus (3.2x)

Kidney disease (1.5x)

Accidents/unintentional injuries (2.5x)

Cancer (1.1x)

Heart disease (1.1x)

Alcohol-induced (7x)

# Transplant/Organ Donation

## American Indian/Alaskan Natives:

- Receive fewer transplants (30% of those on waitlist vs. 49% of whites)
- Donate at a lower rate (0.6% of organ donors vs. 0.8% of organ needs)
- Comprise a lower % of living donors (29% vs. 33% of whites)



# Barriers to Kidney Transplants

- Healthy weight
- No advanced CV disease
- No severe periodontal disease
- No substance use disorders
- Financial considerations (post-transplant costs)
- Logistical issues (travel, caregiver, etc.)

*Association of American Indian Physicians  
newsletter, U of Washington State University 2017*



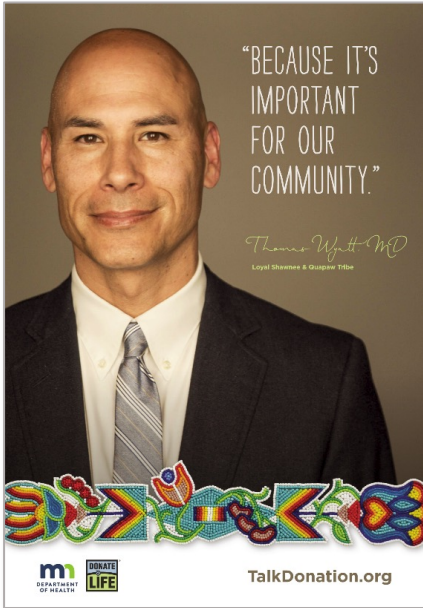
"I'M PART OF  
A GREATER  
WHOLE AND  
TOGETHER WE  
ARE STRONGER."

*Rita Paul*  
Cherokee Tribal Senior




**m** **DONATE**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH **LIFE**

TalkDonation.org



"BECAUSE IT'S  
IMPORTANT  
FOR OUR  
COMMUNITY."

*Thomas Wyatt MD*  
Loyal Blomere & Grogan Title



**m** **DONATE**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH **LIFE**

TalkDonation.org



"ORGAN  
DONATION  
HONORS OUR  
VALUES."

*Kerina Barry*  
Leech Lake Anishinabe



**m** **DONATE**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH **LIFE**

TalkDonation.org




"I WAS 14  
WHEN I HAD  
MY TISSUE  
TRANSPLANT."

*Allen Kuhl*  
Ojibwa




**m** **DONATE**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH **LIFE**

TalkDonation.org



"I'M A DONOR SO  
MY COMMUNITY  
MAY THRIVE."

*Anna Hirsch*  
Lake Marquette First Nation



**m** **DONATE**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH **LIFE**

TalkDonation.org



"DONATION  
IS ABOUT  
HELPING  
SOMEONE  
ELSE LIVE."

*Jade Strom*  
Sisseton Wahpetonian Dakota Oyate



**m** **DONATE**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH **LIFE**

TalkDonation.org















# Significant Cultural Strengths



- Land rights/recovery
- Language revitalization
- Culturally-specific trauma informed approaches to recovery
- Traditional Foods programs
- Nationalism



# Resource List

- Historic Grief & Trauma:  
[www.HealingCollectiveTrauma.com](http://www.HealingCollectiveTrauma.com)
- Minnesota Indian History:  
[www.mnhs.org/fortsnelling/learn/native-americans](http://www.mnhs.org/fortsnelling/learn/native-americans)
- Minnesota Tribes:  
[www.mn.gov/indianaffairs/tribes.html](http://www.mn.gov/indianaffairs/tribes.html)
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women:  
[mmiwusa.org](http://mmiwusa.org)
- North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems:  
[www.natifs.org](http://www.natifs.org)
- Land Acknowledgement:  
[native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca)
- Donation Begins With a Conversation:  
[www.TalkDonation.org](http://www.TalkDonation.org)

# A Special Thanks to Our Presenter



**Thomas Wyatt**

MD, FACEP

Senior Medical Director,  
Emergency Services

