



## **Carmelita Lawlor Lectureship in Palliative Care 2023**

### **Walking Alongside Indigenous Peoples who are Seriously Ill: Addressing the Need for Culturally Safe-r Palliative Care**

**Presented by Holly Prince**

Indigenous Peoples have long-standing cultural and community-based knowledge in caring for community members preparing to journey back to the spirit world. As a result of colonization, however, these practices have been denigrated and Westernized Eurocentric healthcare systems imposed. The ongoing effects of colonialization persist into the present day, as evidenced by the structural and systemic barriers experienced by Indigenous Peoples. These barriers affect access to healthcare, reduce the quality of life for Indigenous Peoples and increase the overall burden of disease to be addressed during the end of life.

Viewing palliative care through a health equity lens is fundamental to providing culturally safe-r care for Indigenous peoples. In identifying equity-oriented approaches, we must unlearn colonial thinking that disregards Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge regarding health, caregiving, dying, and death. Models of care must be based on Indigenous Peoples' values, principles, and worldviews, with equity-oriented approaches to care embedded within the healthcare system and providers' practice.

The session discusses the significant contribution equity-informed approaches to palliative care can have on the health experience and access to care for Indigenous Peoples. It seeks to engage palliative care providers in a dialogue about strategies to create culturally safe-r care. This includes providing space for healthcare providers to examine their positionality through the lens of cultural humility and outlining how health systems can support delivering culturally safe-r care for Indigenous Peoples through education and program development.

#### **Presenter Bio:**

Holly Prince is an Anishinaabekwe and a member of Opwaaganisiniing in Northwestern Ontario. She has a Master's Degree in Social Work and is a Ph.D. Candidate in Educational Studies at Lakehead University. Her research focuses on decolonial and Indigenist education, Indigenous health, and community-based research. Holly has devoted the last 20 years to advancing the right of Indigenous peoples' access to culturally appropriate and equitable palliative care and has mobilized her efforts as a national champion of human rights and dignity for people at the end of life. She is the Lead for the Indigenous People's Health and Aging Division at the Centre for Education and Research on Aging and Health, Lakehead University, where she works as a Project Manager. A part of her role involves planning, implementing, and evaluating palliative care education for Indigenous peoples across Canada. Holly is also the Project Lead for the Canadian Virtual Hospice's LivingMyCulture.ca project.