
NAVAJO CUSTOM IN DEALING WITH HEALTH CARE

Dr. Caleb Lauber

Vada Smiley, Navajo Interpreter





AGENDA

- Introduction
- Where is the Navajo Reservation?
- Navajo custom and belief in Health Care
- Navajo Interpreter
- Teaching from provider perspective

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INTRODUCTION



Dr. Lauber

Clan

PCP role in Cancer Care

Vada Smiley

Navajo Interpreter

My clan is Meadow people and Water Flows

Together people, my paternal clan is Towering

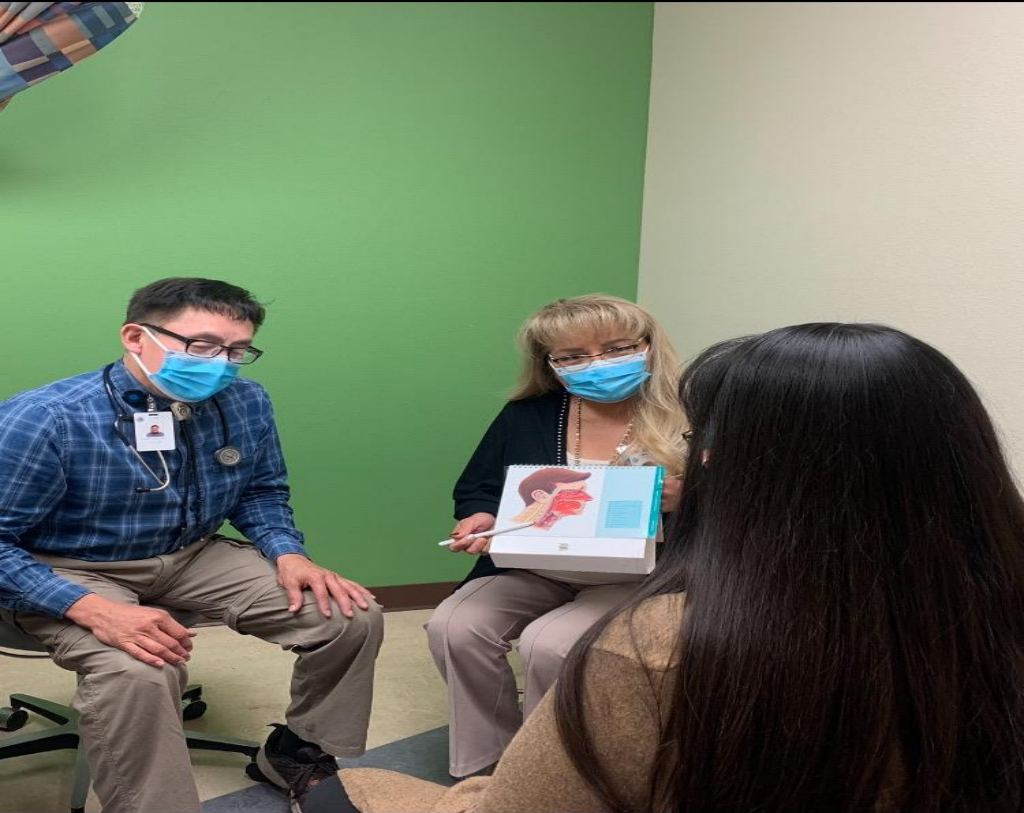
house and maternal clan is Bitter Water people. I

live in Coyote Canyon, where I raised my 4 beautiful children.

NAVAJO RESERVATION IS THE LARGEST
FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBE IN THE US. IT
IS THE LARGEST RESERVATION IN THE
COUNTRY, WITH 27,413 SQUARE MILES, WITH
MORE THAN 399,494 ENROLLED TRIBAL
MEMBERS.

TODAY, WE STILL DRIVE ON DIRT ROADS, ONE
THIRD LIVE WITH NO ELECTRICITY, RUNNING
WATER, AND SOME DON'T OWN A VEHICLE.
MANY LIVE BELOW THE LEVEL OF POVERTY,
MAKING ABOUT \$20,000 A YEAR, WHICH
CAUSES THEM TO LIVE IN ONE HOUSEHOLD.
MULTIGENERATIONAL HOUSEHOLDS
CONTRIBUTED TO HIGH COVID RELATED
DEATHS.





NAVAJO INTEPRETER

PLAN ACCORDINGLY, KNOW WHEN AN INTERPRETER IS NEEDED.

CONVERSTATION CAN OFTEN TAKE LONGER, ESPECIALLY WHEN TOPICS ARE COMPLEX

INTERPRETER MAY USE MORE WORDS THAN THE ORGINAL SPEAKER BECAUSE OF THE GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX OF THE TARGET LANGUAGE.

BRIEF THE INTERPRETER:

YOUR NAME, COMPANY NAME, AWARE OF TOPIC AND COPY OF DOCUMENTS (UNFAMILIAR TERMS)

FAMILY MEMBER INTERPRETER

INTERPRETER SETTING



HOW DO WE SUCCESSFULLY EDUCATE COMPLEX TOPICS TO PATIENTS?



IMPROVING HEALTH CARE OUTCOMES

- Spending more time with patients
- Enthusiastic
- Motivated
- Responsive
- Interactive

SUCCESSFUL POINTS OF TEACHING

models

Anatomical
models.
3D models

Hands on

- Physical exam
- Showing them area of the body

vision

Being cognizant of
visual-spatial mode
of learning.

language

Even English
speaking Navajo
people, benefit from
teaching in English,
followed in
Navajo.

repeat

Re-educate complex
subjects at each visit
if possible.

TRADITIONAL BELIEFS

- Cancer
- Inappropriate examples
- Body parts
- Eye contact
- Quiet behavior
- Hogan





SUMMARY

Working at NMCC has given us new challenges. Using examples to teach.





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AHE'HEE

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