

Global Indigenous Peoples' Health Caucus
Committee on Indigenous Health

The Health of Indigenous Children and Youth

CHAIRMAN, PANEL, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

This session today is on health, for indigenous people, people and youths. What I am about to speak on is very much a health issue, especially for our young women and women in general.

In the United States educational systems, without parental consent, a nurse cannot administer not even an aspirin to a minor, but a minor can have an abortion without consent. This is not a religious issue, but a moral and health issue. Statistics for 2002 in the United States is over 800,000 abortions, worldwide, 883½ million abortions a year.

In the United States abortions can be done right up to the time of delivery, with a doctor's letter. Why would we allow a doctor to put any minor at risk like this? To my knowledge there is no age limit in the United States. All the minor has to be is pregnant. Complications from abortion are many; some are infections, sterility, emotional trauma, and death, to name a few. I also feel this is an outrage to all the indigenous population, where there are so few of us. This is another way of ethnic cleansing and they would like us to disappear. On the Pine Ridge reservation we tried to gather statistics on health issues. We were not allowed access. Why the secrecy to our health issues?

Due to abortion whom are we eliminating from life? Maybe people like Mandela, Black Elk, Martin Luther King, Ghandi, Ingrid Flying Eagle or even you or I. It is very important for the forum to take action.

In the emergency room today the medical profession will go to any lengths to save a life to those who are barely clinging to life. Research is being done for cancers, aids and birth defects. They cling to life. Why? Because life is so precious, even in poverty, war and adversity we still cling to life. Would we rid ourselves of people with disabilities or elders who become infirmed? Abortions are done by the thousands right here in New York every day. We cried when the twin towers went down. Who is crying for our lost generations whose end is the garbage pail and forgotten?

I plead to the forum of the second session to open its spirit to this issue, in the spirit to life not death.

Thank You,

Catherine Thunderbird
Monday, 19 May 2003