

2026 NBMS HEALTH SUMMIT



Dr. Alika Lafontaine

Named *Maclean's* top Healthcare Innovator of 2023, Dr. Alika Lafontaine has been at the centre of healthcare system change for almost two decades. He is the first Indigenous physician and the youngest doctor to lead the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), and the first Indigenous physician to be listed on *The Medical Post's* 50 Most Powerful Doctors. As an experienced health leader, Lafontaine speaks-passionately on the politics of

healthcare, implementing and scaling equity, effective advocacy, and redesigning health systems.

Lafontaine has held both provincial and national medical leadership positions. He co-led the Indigenous Health Alliance, growing it into one of the most ambitious Indigenous health transformation projects in Canadian history. The Alliance represented more than 150 First Nations and successfully advocated for \$68 million in funding. In 2017, the Alliance was recognized by the Public Policy Forum, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau presenting Lafontaine with the inaugural Emerging Indigenous Leader award.

Lafontaine went on to found Safespace Networks, an anonymous learning platform for reporting racism and healthcare harm, providing protection for patients and families and assisting them with navigating fragmented and confusing health reporting processes.

During his presidency at the CMA, Lafontaine was the driving force behind securing the largest nominal Federal investment in healthcare since 2004, changes in physician credential recognition in several provinces (including a first-of-its-kind Atlantic physician registry), and strong commitments to national collaboration in managing health data and health human resources. The CMA also adopted a long-term Indigenous health goal and began an apology process related to Indigenous patient maltreatment in Canada's healthcare systems.

Grounded in a mixed Indigenous ancestry of Metis, Oji-Cree and Pacific Islander, Lafontaine completed his medical degree and anesthesia fellowship training at the University of Saskatchewan before moving to northern Alberta where he has spent most of his clinical career.

Move Fast and Break Trust: What Happens After the Social Contract Dissolves

Across Canada, health care is being reshaped by forces that are moving faster than the systems, professions, and relationships that once held it together. As disruption accelerates, the social contract that aligned physicians, governments, and the public is dissolving, driven not only by structural change but by the erosion of trust at its core. When trust dissolves, the social contract dissolves with it. What happens next depends on the forces that rebuild, or further weaken, that trust.

This keynote explores those forces and the emerging landscape they are creating. Through story, lived experience, and reconciliation-focused approaches, we will examine how trust, belonging, and collaboration can be strengthened in the space between what was and what comes next, and what it means for clinicians and health-system partners navigating a rapidly changing future.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- identify the major forces driving disruption in today's health-care environment and describe how these shifts are reshaping expectations, roles, and relationships within the physician society social contract.
- examine how stories, lived experience, and reconciliation-focused approaches can strengthen trust, belonging, and collaboration among clinicians, health-system partners, and Indigenous communities.