



# Aknutmaq

news and updates from Tajikeimik

## Developing Our Vision for Health and Wellness - Mawio'mi 2022

Wela'liog to everyone who joined us at the Tajikeimik Mawio'mi: Health and Wellness Gathering in Kijipuktuk in November 2022. We had approximately 250 attendees from across 13 communities, including members of Grand Council, Chiefs and Councils, Health Directors, community health champions, and representatives from partner Mi'kmaw organizations.

The day and half gathering opened with prayers and teachings from Grand Chief Norman Sylliboy and Elder Clark Paul, and drumming and dancing by Eastern Eagle and Leah Doucette and her daughters.

We heard from Lead Chiefs for Health, Chief Andrea Paul and Chief Norman Bernard. Tajikeimik shared Our Health Transformation Journey in a conversation with Sharon (Paul) Rudderham, Director of Health Transformation; Philippa Pictou, Director Policy and Planning; and Lindsay Peach, Executive Director. Tajikeimik also presented on Elukuti'kw wjit naji-wlo'ltinenew utanminal: We are all working toward better health for all in our communities, and how we are already working differently



Health and Wellness Mawio'mi 2022, Kijipuktuk

with funding partners. This was demonstrated through the distribution of recent mental health funding, and the development of the new Early Years program in partnership with the Martin Family Initiative (MFI).

Philippa was joined by Maryi Joe Francis, Early Years Development Coordinator, and Jessica Hayden, Director of Early Years from MFI. They shared an update on the work being done to prepare for launch sites in Membertou, Paqtnekek, Eskasoni, Potlotek and the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre, and showed the Mi'kmaw Early Years materials.

Regional Chief PJ Prosper led a panel discussion with the Co-Chairs of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia Health Directors' Committee, Elaine Allison, Health Director in Wagmatcook and Juliana Julian, Health Director in Paqtnekek, and the Tajikeimik leadership team: Lindsay Peach, Philippa Pictou, Sharon (Paul) Rudderham, Nancy MacIntyre Meagher, Director of Finance; and Carolyn Pierce, Director of Communications and Engagement.

Perhaps the highlight of the Mawio'mi was the opportunity for all participants

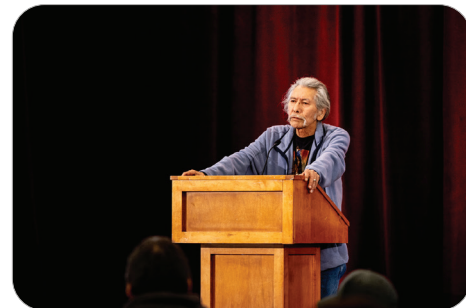
continued on next page...



Philippa Pictou, Sharon (Paul) Rudderham, and Lindsay Peach - Tajikeimik



Eastern Eagle Drummers



Elder Clark Paul



## Developing Our Vision ...continued

to share their vision for health and wellness through talking circles. There were three sessions, with participants in 28 circles, discussing the following questions:

1. What excites you most about having our own health and wellness organization – what opportunities are you hoping will happen through Tajikeymik?
2. What do you think wholistic health and wellness means to the Mi'kmaw nation?
3. What do you see as Tajikeymik's work to support strong, vibrant and resilient individuals, families, communities and Nation?
4. What health or wellness support or service do you wish was available in Mi'kmaw communities today?
5. What does culturally safe health and wellness programs and services mean to you?
6. We are embarking on this journey. What is one piece of advice you have for the organization, Tajikeymik?

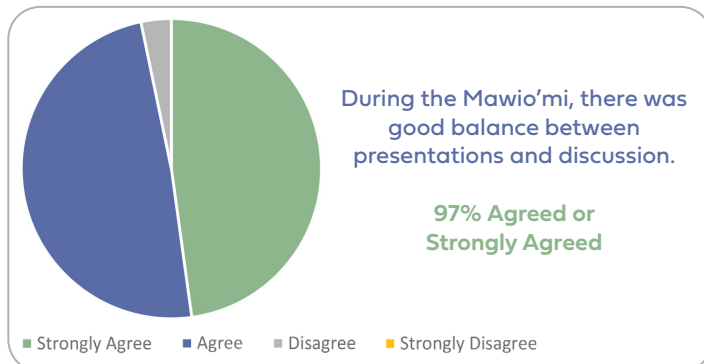
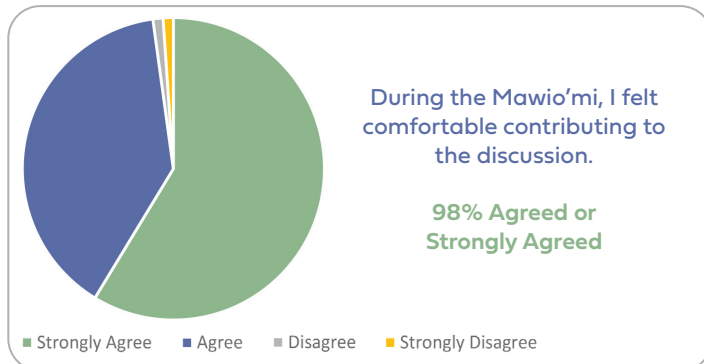
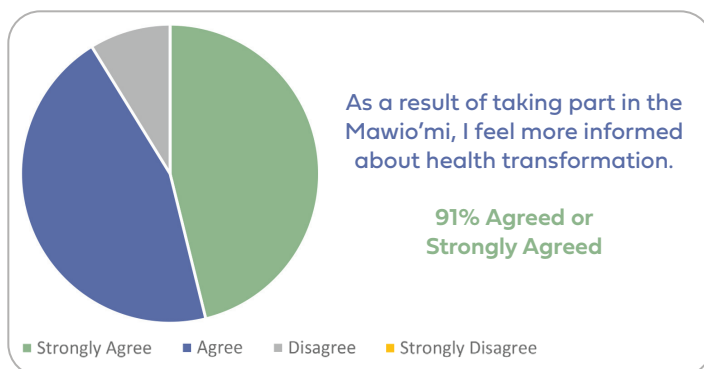
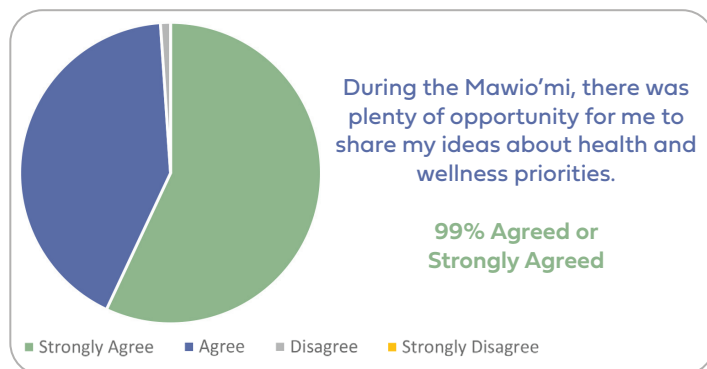
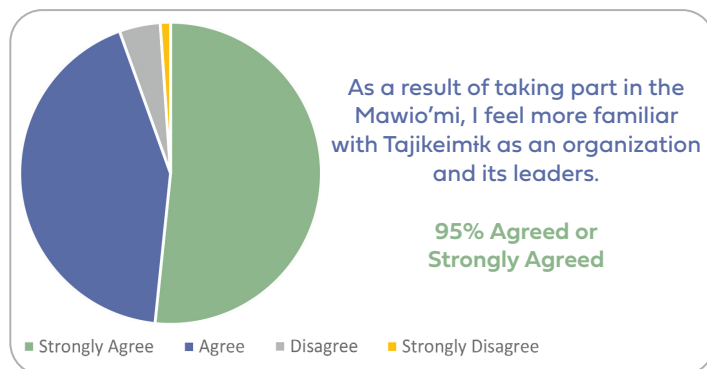
Mawio'mi 2022 closed with a prayer from Elder Clark.

At right: Talking Circles



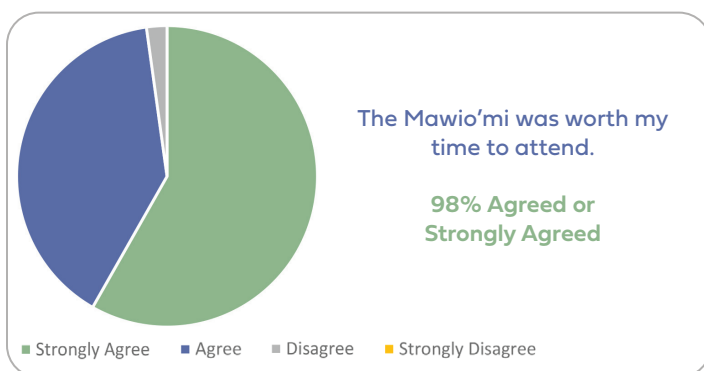
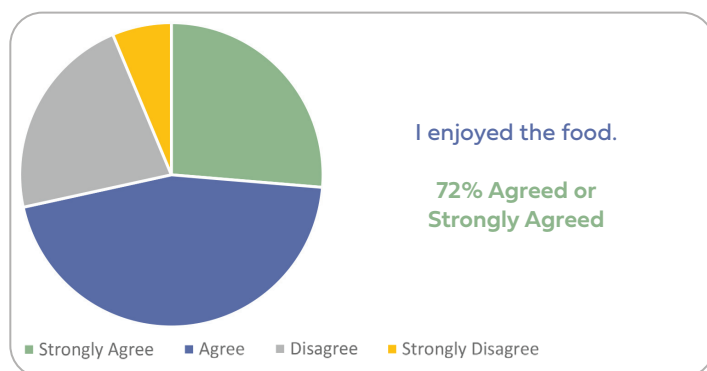
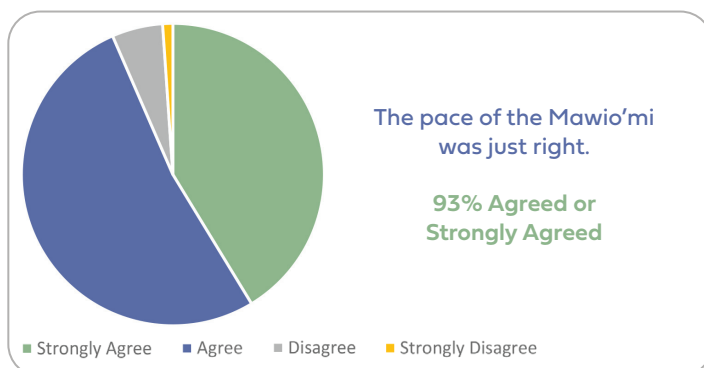
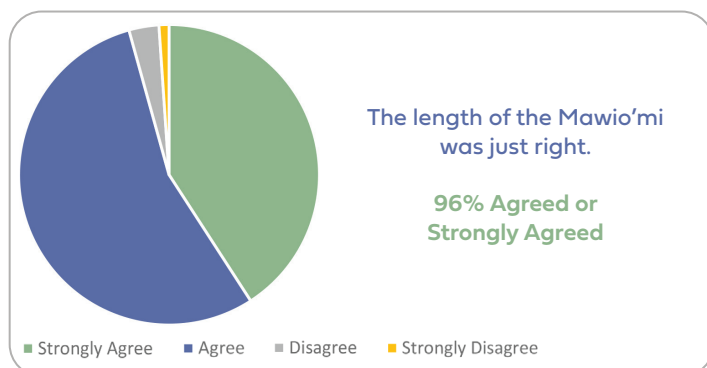
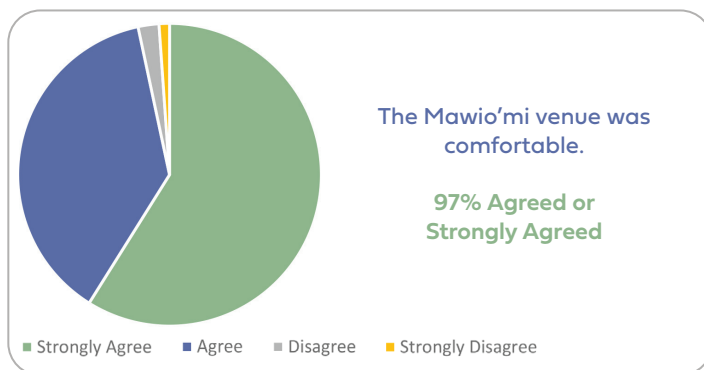
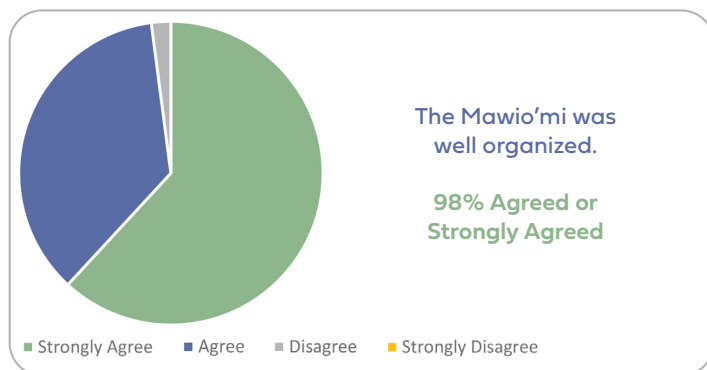
## Mawio'mi Evaluations – Your Feedback Shapes Future Events

Of the approximately 250 people who attended the Mawio'mi, 98 completed the event evaluation form that was distributed at the end of the event and by e-mail after. Feedback from participants is very important, as it helps us plan future events. Here is what we heard.



continued on next page...

## Your Feedback ...continued



*"I come from this hopeful that more health care will be made available to our communities now that we have such advocacy."*

*"Story teaches the values and behaviours needed for healing and health. We need to go beyond just giving information and expecting people to make better choices. We can do this through food, story, ceremony, and other practices."*

*"The conference was unlike anything else. Loved seeing and listening to all of the leaders in Tajikeyimik, Grand Council, Chiefs, Councils, health staff. The unity of all of these people made it so inspiring for the future of health care."*

*"I loved how it involved everyone from community leaders, health care staff and community members. You all thought like a nation!"*

*"I think there needs to be more discussions on mental wellness. Mental wellness hits every area in our communities. Maybe another conference or session focused just on mental wellness and healing."*



## About Us

Tajiikemik is the emerging health and wellness organization working toward health transformation for Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia. Health transformation is a multi-year process of the Mi'kmaq taking control of our health and wellness resources and decision-making.

Created and guided by the Chiefs and Health Directors from the 13 First Nations in Nova Scotia, Tajiikemik is on a journey to transform the health system to better meet the needs of Mi'kmaq people and communities in Nova Scotia.

Tajiikemik works with communities, Indigenous organizations and partners to enhance existing health and wellness programs and develop new initiatives – while ensuring they are accessible, community-led, rooted in wholistic and two-eyed seeing approaches, and guided by Mi'kmaq culture and values.

**Tajiikemik Means:** To be healthy

**Vision:** A healthy, vibrant Mi'kmaq Nation.

**Mission:** Elukuti'kw wjit naji-wlo'tinenew utanminal. ~ We are working toward better health for all in our communities.

### Millbrook Office

4 Stanley Johnson Street  
Millbrook, Nova Scotia B6L 5B4

### Membertou Office

90 San'tele'sew Awti, Suite 305  
Membertou, Nova Scotia B1S 0A5

**P:** 1-844-381-7779

**E:** taji@mhwns.ca

**W:** mhwns.ca

**Social Media:**



## What is Next?

The goals of the Mawio'mi were to introduce the organization and leaders of Tajiikemik, to collaborate and discuss the priorities of health transformation, and to gather to celebrate the start of the health transformation journey.

Since the event, we have been compiling the information shared during the talking circles. These learnings will be brought back to leadership, communities and partners. Themes emerging from the talking circles include:

- More control by community - flexibility and say in how services are delivered
- Wholistic and cultural approaches
- Educate and employ our people in healthcare, and support them in their learning and work
- More, readily accessible, fair services for all
- Community consultation and engagement
- Support for mental health, addictions and trauma
- Decolonize the health system

The Mawio'mi gathering was just the start of Tajiikemik's community engagement. We continue to collaborate with leadership, health directors and health staff, and we are committed to continuing engagement with all community members and partner organizations. As mentioned during the Mawio'mi, in the spring 2023 we will begin engagement sessions in each community. Together, we will create a self-determined health organization, and shape the future of Mi'kmaq health and wellness in Nova Scotia.

## View and Share Mawio'mi Photos

Photos of the Tajiikemik Mawio'mi are available at: <https://johannamatthews.shootproof.com/gallery/Taji2022>. Feel free to download and share. If you are sharing photos in a professional setting (i.e. in a report, work-related story, or presentation), please credit the photos to Tajiikemik. If you are sharing for fun (i.e. on your own social media), no need to credit us.



Bernadette Marshall, Nova Scotia  
Native Women's Association



Kji Keptin Antle Denny



Elaine Allison and Juliana Julian, Health Director Co-Chairs; Regional Chief PJ Prosper; Sharon (Paul) Rudderham and Philippa Pictou, Tajiikemik



Chief Norman Bernard and Tommy Peck, Wagmatcook