

# On One Native American Reservation, Vaccine Hesitancy Has Long Historical Roots | The Nation

By Sarah Stacke

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“Mass sterilization to most people is just an event,” Remi Bald Eagle told me recently, holding back tears. “But to us, that’s family that never made it here.” The sterilization campaign that the Indian Health Service carried out in the 1960s and ’70s afflicted somewhere between 25 and 40 percent of Native American women of childbearing age nationwide. Sterilizations were performed through coercion and without informed consent, a grievous violation of the physical integrity and personal agency of the women affected. On the Cheyenne River Reservation, the sovereign Lakota nation in South Dakota where Bald Eagle lives, the campaign left deep scars in the community. “There’s always that loss,” said Bald Eagle.

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