

BULLETIN

HSA welcomes report, commits to address systemic racism in health care

November 30, 2020

HSA welcomes today's release of *In Plain Sight*, the report by Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond addressing Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in BC's health care system.

The report includes 24 recommendations for action, all focused on addressing the unacceptable experience of Indigenous people in the province's health care system, as described in the report:

"Indigenous people want to see change. They want to be treated with professionalism, compassion, and respect. They want to be believed when they report health care concerns and symptoms. Participants want to see policies and actions in the health system that meaningfully address racism and discrimination, including an accessible, meaningful and safe feedback process regarding health care experiences. Indigenous people see the need for training among health care workers to counteract stereotypes." (In Plain Sight, full report, Page 31)

HSA President Val Avery said HSA will review the 24 recommendations and assess the role the union and its members have in addressing the widespread systemic racism.

"As a union, HSA is committed to working at all levels to make our health care system a safe place for everyone and we are committed to do more to end systemic racism in our communities. We are all responsible for doing our part in this critical work," Avery said.

"Ms. Turpel-Lafond's report also highlights troubling experiences of Indigenous health care workers, and HSA is committed to ensuring our members can do their jobs without having to endure racism and discrimination at work," she added.

The investigation found wide spread systemic racism in the system affecting health care workers experiencing racism in their workplaces. The report found that:

- *Over half of the Indigenous respondents (52%) who took part in the HWS stated that they had personally experienced racism at work because of their Indigenous identity. This behaviour was most frequently exhibited by a colleague or fellow student (74%), or an individual in a position of authority over them (58%). (In Plain Sight, executive summary, Page 34)*
- *Indigenous staff who were the targets of racist behaviour reported that it limited their career and resulted in negative personal outcomes. Over one-half of respondents said they experienced negative effects from racist behaviour. These negative effects included everything from physical health to self-esteem and chances for promotion. Close to 100 per cent of respondents reported moderate or significant negative effects on their mental and emotional health. (In Plain Sight, executive summary, Page 34)*

The report mirrors the findings of HSA's report, *Confronting Racism with Solidarity*, released in August. The findings of the survey of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) members is helping to guide the development of anti-racism and member engagement work, and is intended to inform development of tools and

resources to equip HSA, stewards, and the broader membership with information needed to respond to issues of racism in the workplace.

Throughout the fall, HSA members have taken advantage of a series of workshops addressing decolonization and discrimination, and next month, a workshop focused on Anti-racism in Health Care and Social Services is fully subscribed.

The workshop focuses on developing tools for health care and social services workers to be able to apply key concepts related to systemic, institutional, and interpersonal racism. The workshop's goals are for participants to understand how health outcomes are connected to racism embedded in policy and practices; how Whiteness, power, and privilege, contribute to racial oppression; identify practical ways to implement anti-racist practices, and develop skills to confront racism (recognize it, speak up, enact change).

"The report released today confirms we have a lot of to work to do to address and unravel systemic racism in our health care system. As a union of health care professionals, we are committed to that work," said Avery.

[In Plain Sight \(Executive Summary\) is available for download here](#), the [full report is available for download here](#).

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