



**March 19, 2021**

**Re: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

The United Nations (UN) has declared March 21 the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We observe this day on March 21 to commemorate the anniversary of the day in 1960 that South African police in Sharpeville opened fire and murdered 69 people who were attending a peaceful demonstration against South Africa's (then) apartheid laws.

On this day we recognize the extreme harms and damage that racism, racial prejudice and all forms of intolerance have had on our society, culturally, socially and in terms of health equity and access. In Canada Indigenous, Black and people of colour people experience the lasting impacts of systemic racism in health care. Many people are physically harmed by these behaviours and others are left feeling distrustful of the health care system. Racism is a key social determinant of health and contributes to social inequities and poorer health outcomes.

Nurses interact with people in all sectors, across all domains of practice from first to last breath. As professionals, nurses have an opportunity to learn from the experiences of Indigenous, Black and people of colour in health care. It is our responsibility to work to eradicate the conditions that perpetuate systemic racism.

NNPBC stands with Black, Indigenous and People of colour against racism. Equity is not a privilege for some, but a right for all. Affecting change requires commitment, constant action and a mindfulness that ensures that we always consider the impact of our words and actions. NNPBC reaffirms our commitment to supporting lasting change in the nursing profession and in health and social policy.

**Further Reading:**

- [United Nations- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#)
- [COVID-19 and Racism Against Indigenous People](#)
- [NNPBC Board Statement re: In Plain Sight Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care](#)
- [NNPBC's Anti-Racism Statement](#)
- [NNPBC's Commitment to Indigenous Health](#)
- [Reporting Racism in Health Care](#)
- [An Apology on Behalf of Nursing](#)
- [Racialization and Politicization of COVID-19](#)
- [Re: Treatment of Indigenous Woman by Nurses in Quebec](#)