



Revised June 1, 2021

The NNPBC Board of Directors wishes to thank Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond for her months long investigation into systemic racism in the BC health care system. Her report entitled "[In Plain Sight Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care](#)" released on November 30, 2020 highlights distressing, troubling and deeply rooted problems with our system. The information compiled belies issues so deeply rooted that they sadly have become part of the reality of interacting with health care for Indigenous people.

The report concludes without any shadow of a doubt that the vast majority of Indigenous people (84%) have experienced racism and/or discrimination in the health care system, and that this racism has negatively and disproportionately impacted the health outcomes of Indigenous people.

The report includes a series of recommendations to be applied at all levels of health care from government to point of care. In particular, professional associations, regulatory colleges and unions have a responsibility to play an active role in being accountable for addressing these problems, using appropriate language and ensuring that Indigenous leadership tables are established to oversee these recommendations. As the professional association, NNPBC wholeheartedly commits to this work and will continue to rely on our Indigenous Policy Table as well as our Indigenous Board Director and Councillors to ensure that we enact each of these important recommendations.

Nurses have a foundational responsibility to practice nursing ethically and provide safe and competent care. Furthermore, these actions violated the public trust by neglecting the most fundamental duty: to provide safe care. NNPBC condemns systemic racism perpetuated on patients who rely on nurses to uphold our primary imperative to care. 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 people in health care. It is our responsibility to work to eradicate the conditions that perpetuate systemic racism. As nurses and leaders, let us work together to make health care a safe place for all.

We thank all of the brave individuals who have shared their stories and thoughts. We stand with nurses across BC who know that racism has no place in health care or our society, and who understand that accepting any less than a complete eradication of incredibly damaging systemic racism is unacceptable. NNPBC strongly supports the recommendations in this report and stands ready to support this work with actions.

The recent discovery of the remains of 215 children at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School underscores the extent to which systemic racism and colonization have impacted Indigenous people. The unthinkable horror of hearing of these children buried in an unmarked grave, having been forcibly taken away from their families and loved ones fills us with great sorrow. Sadly, we also know it is not an isolated incident. While this has been sad discovery, it is not shocking. We know the impact of Canada's residential school system has caused trauma, pain and death for an unthinkable number of people, and has impacted subsequent generations as well. Canada's history of colonization, residential schools and racism must be acknowledged. As Dr. Bonnie Henry noted, this did not happen to the Indigenous people of our province, it was done to them as a result of racism and colonization. We renew our commitment to ensuring that nursing continues to learn from the experiences of Indigenous people, and we acknowledge that we must do better.