



# NEWS RELEASE

## **Northern Health Region Releases New Addressing Indigenous-Specific Racism Policy**

November 23, 2023 - The Northern Health Region has developed and implemented a new policy to address Indigenous-specific racism.

The Addressing Indigenous Specific Racism Policy acknowledges that racism exists in our health system and provides guidance and direction to healthcare staff who witness or experience racism. The policy also provides a clear pathway for patients and their families to address racism they witness or experience.

Chief Indigenous Health Officer, Charlene Lafreniere stated “We have much work to do, yet, it is still important for us to pause, and acknowledge this important step on our journey to truth and reconciliation and the elimination of Indigenous-specific racism within the NHR. Our hope is that with the implementation and monitoring of this policy, that people will have better health care experiences at the NHR.”

NHR recognizes that this type of work requires a system-wide approach. Many people contributed to this work over the past two years including, NHR leadership, staff, students, Indigenous Health partners, community organizations, patients, and families, including a working group to support the development. People offered lived experiences and an Indigenous and anti-racism lens to guide this policy and the processes.

The development and implementation of this Policy is part of NHR’s commitment to take real action towards the Declaration to Eliminate All Forms of Indigenous Specific Racism, which was signed by Northern Health Region (NHR), Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO), and Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin (KIM) on September 26, 2022. Minister of Health Uzoma Asagwara applauds this milestone, “This policy is the first of it’s kind for a Regional Health Authority in Manitoba. It provides clear process for both patients receiving care, as well as staff working in healthcare. It formalizes and prioritizes Indigenous-Specific racism so we can continue improving the healthcare system and patient experiences for Indigenous people across the province.”

NHR Chief Executive Officer Raj Sewda added “This showcases the Northern Health Region’s dedication and commitment to our Values: Trust, Respect, Integrity, Compassion, Humility, while working together towards our strategic priority “Eliminating Indigenous-Specific Racism.”

The Plan identifies several specific goals that are aligned with each strategic priority. The Policy and process guidelines can be found on the NHR website in the About Us, Reports and Publications section.

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