



**Keewatinohk Inniniw  
Minoayawin Inc.**  
Northern Peoples' Wellness



**NORTHERN  
HEALTH REGION**



**Manitoba  
Keewatinowi  
Okimakanak Inc.**

## **Questions and Answers About the *Declaration to End All Forms of Indigenous-Specific Racism* in the Northern Health Region**

**September 2022**

On September 26, 2022, leaders from Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO), Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc. (KIM), and the Northern Regional Health Authority (NRHA) met in Thompson, Manitoba to sign a *Declaration to End All Forms of Indigenous-Specific Racism* in healthcare in the Northern Health Region.

This document outlines questions you may have about this declaration.

### **What is the declaration?**

The *Declaration to End All Forms of Indigenous-Specific Racism* in healthcare is an important agreement between three partners. It symbolizes work already underway to achieve the goal of ending Indigenous-specific racism in healthcare in the NRHA and to begin the process of healing. This declaration helps to formalize our efforts. We do this with humility and in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.

### **Who signed the declaration?**

Representatives from MKO, KIM, and the NRHA signed the declaration in Thompson, MB. Three witnesses also signed the declaration.

### **Why do we need a declaration?**

We know Indigenous patients and staff within the Northern Health Region face racism. As a result, we created this declaration. We collectively want to build a better future for Northern citizens by eliminating the racism that impacts the ability of citizens to access safe, culturally relevant health care.

### **Who does racism impact in the healthcare system?**

Racism impacts both patients and staff. Racism is unacceptable in all areas of healthcare. This declaration will work to eliminate these experiences. Indigenous-specific and other forms of racism exist in our society. We will do our collective best to share the message this is not okay. We will work together as partners to address this through education and the creation of a racism-free environment within all NRHA healthcare facilities and settings.

### **Do you believe you can end racism in healthcare within the Northern Health Region?**

Yes. We are committed to working together to achieve this important goal. We acknowledge that Indigenous-specific racism occurs in healthcare in the NRHA. This is a journey of many steps. We jointly commit to continue meaningful and sustained work to show our joint commitment. Rebuilding and strengthening trust in our healthcare system is vital to achieving the best healthcare outcomes for the populations and patients the region serves.

We will create and implement plans to achieve our goal. Regular reporting will ensure transparency and accountability as we move forward. The partners will determine the process and form for the reporting as part of their next steps.

### **What will change?**

Next steps include an education campaign with staff and a social media campaign designed to acknowledge racism exists within the NRHA. Racism is unacceptable and we will work to advise citizens on how they can report racist experiences within healthcare in the NRHA.

### **How long will this take?**

We will work for as long as it takes to achieve our goal. It is too early to predict an end date or impose a deadline. Our framework has a five-year timeline. We anticipate needing an updated framework in five years from now.

### **How will we know if it is working?**

In addition to anecdotal evidence, the partners will report regularly on our progress. We have developed a collaborative action-based framework to guide us in measuring our efforts. We will formalize an oversight function within our working relationships.

### **What can community members do to support this work?**

As a starting point, it is helpful to learn more about Indigenous Peoples. Unfortunately, there are many stereotypes and biases that exist about Indigenous Peoples, so it's helpful to listen to the voices and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples themselves.

Read books by Indigenous authors, watch movies directed and produced by Indigenous creators, attend workshops led by Indigenous Peoples, talk to Elders, volunteer to help at an Indigenous organization, attend ceremonies, etc. If you don't have any Indigenous Peoples in your friendship circle, ask yourself why that is. Think about how you can be a friend or ally to an Indigenous person. Work to learn more about Indigenous Peoples in Manitoba. Support Indigenous-run businesses and entrepreneurs by purchasing their goods and services.

Many people often do not realize they are exhibiting racist behaviours as the dominant society has perpetrated untruths and stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples across Canada for decades.

### **Where can citizens report racism?**

There are a few ways you can report racism. You can:

- Make a report to the NRHA Patient Experience office by calling toll-free at 1-888-340-6742 or via email: [patientexperience@nrha.ca](mailto:patientexperience@nrha.ca)
- Speak with the NRHA's Indigenous Patient Navigator by calling toll free 1-888-340-6742 or 204-687-9320 or you can send an email to: [patientexperience@nrha.ca](mailto:patientexperience@nrha.ca)
- Speak with a First Nations person at MKO about your experience by contacting MKO's Client Navigator toll free at 1-800-442-0488, via cell at 204-307-5066, or via email: [bernice.thorassie@mkonorth.com](mailto:bernice.thorassie@mkonorth.com)

### **How will the NRHA change racist policies, systems, and/or behaviours?**

This is an ongoing process. We will review policies and systems to identify areas that need changes. The NRHA is developing a policy specific to racism experienced by Indigenous Peoples as another tool to support the system in eliminating racism.

### **How will the NRHA deal with racism in the workplace?**

The NRHA has started to offer cultural proficiency and Indigenous cultural safety education and training for staff. We continue to offer and encourage this training. In addition, we will start an education campaign to raise awareness of racism and support positive behaviours and attitudes in the delivery of healthcare.

### **What is the NRHA board's role in this declaration?**

The NRHA Board has an oversight role. The board supports implementation and will receive regular reports and briefings on specific initiatives and progress at their meetings.

### **Where can I find updates about this declaration?**

The partners will provide updates about the declaration prominently on their respective websites.