

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health; Emily Williams, CEO (Interim)

DATE: 2021 April 15

ADDRESSING ANTI-BLACK RACISM: A PLAN FOR THE MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health:

- 1) *Receive Report No. 19-21 re “Addressing Anti-Black Racism: A Plan for the Middlesex-London Health Unit” for information;*
- 2) *Endorse the proposed Anti-Black Racism Plan for MLHU; and*
- 3) *Direct staff to develop an implementation plan, including immediate implementation of recommendations that can be enacted in the short term, and resource implications as appropriate.*

Key Points

- The Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) engaged the services of Wright of Way Consultancy Group since October 2020 to develop an anti-Black racism plan for execution by the health unit.
- A literature scan and community consultation with 375 participants resulted in the development of 45 recommendations for public health action.
- It is critical that the organization ensure ongoing and sustained commitment to and resourcing of this work, over both the short and long term, in order for true change to be realized.

Background

An extensive needs assessment was completed at the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) in 2017 to support the development of a health equity staff capacity building plan. The resulting comprehensive plan outlined various capacity building efforts in several health equity domains, including diversity and inclusion, for January 2018 to December 2020. Efforts to build capacity related to Indigenous Public Health Practice were planned for the duration of the plan, with anti-Black racism efforts intended to extend from mid-2018 to the end of 2020. A number of factors such as workload, competing demands, change in lead staffing, modernization discussions, a decision to focus intensely on Indigenous Public Health Practice prior to initiating work related to anti-Black racism, and COVID-19, significantly delayed the original timelines for building organizational and staff capacity related to anti-Black racism.

In the wake of the declaration of racism as a public health crisis by the Middlesex-London Health Unit Board of Health in June 2020, MLHU reprioritized its commitment to identify public health actions to address and eliminate anti-Black racism.

Wright of Way (WOW) Consultancy Group was contracted to develop an anti-Black racism plan, following MLHU’s request for proposal- RFP 2020-01 in October 2020 ([Report No. 04-21](#)). WOW Consultancy Group specializes in community development, health equity, community engagement, social impact and corporate social responsibility, with a team that has experience in Black community engagement, health leadership, and health systems planning both locally and internationally.

Development of an Anti-Black Racism Plan

WOW Consultancy Group completed a literature review and jurisdictional scan, and conducted community consultations. Information was gathered from 375 members of African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) communities in London and Middlesex County through a survey, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews.

After a series of consultations with MLHU's Health Equity and Reconciliation Team manager, anti-Black racism lead public health nurse, and Chief Nursing Officer, a final draft of the anti-Black racism plan has been delivered by the consultant (see [Appendix A](#)). The 76-page report outlines the consultant's literature review, community engagement process, data collection, key findings and recommendations.

Key Components of the Plan

Ways of Working - In striving to mitigate and eliminate anti-Black racism and its myriad of negative impacts, it is critical to consider not only what actions are taken, but also the attitudes and intentions behind the actions, and the manner in which those actions are implemented. The plan's 'Ways of Working' model, brings meaningful illustration to the plan (see [Appendix B](#)).

Recommendations - A total of 45 recommendations are included in MLHU's Anti-Black Racism Plan, organized according to the following categories which align with the National Collaborating Centre's (2013) roles for public health equity action (see [Appendix C](#)):

- Assess and Report (8 recommendations)
- Modify and Orient (11 recommendations)
- Partner with Other Sectors (10 recommendations)
- Engage in Healthy Public Policy (9 recommendations)
- Reorient Governance and Leadership (7 recommendations)

As ongoing engagement and consultation occurs through the processes of planning and implementing recommendations within this Plan, MLHU will need to remain open to the evolving needs, insights, and direction from the ACB community so that the organization can be responsive to any necessary refinements or adjustments to these recommendations. Some of the recommendations can be implemented over the short- and intermediate-term, while many will take much longer to plan, implement, and embed into ongoing work. It is critical that the organization ensure ongoing and sustained commitment to and resourcing of this work over the long term in order for true change to be realized.

Next Steps

The Health Equity and Reconciliation Team, led by the Chief Nursing Officer, will lead MLHU in further planning and implementation of the Plan's recommendations. Staff will implement those recommendations which can be immediately enacted. Other recommendations will be prioritized, and detailed implementation plans will be developed. Other teams, such as the Public Health Assessment and Surveillance Team and the Program Planning and Evaluation Team, will provide significant support to implementation of multiple recommendations. Every team and program will have accountabilities related to implementation of these recommendations, and as such, it is expected an internal working group will be created to ensure planning and implementation is conducted in a cohesive manner and in ways that are relevant and meaningful across the diverse programs in the organization. A shared organization-wide workplan process will be piloted. The establishment of an ACB Anti-Black Racism Plan Integration Table will also be prioritized to ensure the Plan is implemented in an effective, responsive, collective, and accountable manner. Any resource implications will be identified and brought forward as appropriate.

This report was submitted by the Office of the Chief Nursing Officer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Mackie'.

Christopher Mackie, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E Williams'.

Emily Williams, BScN, RN, MBA
Chief Executive Officer (Interim)