



Image above: *Mother Earth's Song* created by Darlene Gait of the Lekwungen speaking peoples, the Songhees and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) First Nations, for the College of Dental Hygienists of BC in 2019.

Addressing Indigenous-Specific Racism in BC Health Care: Report Released

On November 30, 2020 former judge and Representative for Children and Youth in BC, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond released a report detailing their months' long investigation: *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in BC health care*. The full report is available at the following link:

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/613/2020/11/In-Plain-Sight-Full-Report.pdf>

“Evidence overwhelmingly indicates that stereotyping and the racist treatment that often accompanies it are common experiences for Indigenous people in B.C. health care” (p. 36).

The investigation ordered by the BC Minister of Health uncovered some of the most racist and unsafe experiences that Indigenous Peoples in BC have faced when seeking health care services from registered health care professionals. CDHBC is reviewing the full report and carefully considering how to implement its findings and recommendations into the regulation of safe and ethical dental hygiene services.

Registered dental hygienists, like all registered health care professionals, have a duty to provide health care services free from any form of racism or discrimination. Where this issue persists disproportionately among Indigenous Peoples, this issue requires an urgent response that is specific to the cultural safety needs of Indigenous Peoples. Dental hygienists are encouraged to review the report at the link above, as well as the following resources, and reflect on further learning in the field of anti-racism, prejudice, cultural competency and cultural safety and humility.



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In 2019, CDHBC made room for decolonization within the *Interpretation Guidelines* which can be reviewed on the CDHBC website:

- **Cultural Safety and Humility,**
- **Duty to Provide Care,**
- **Consent of Minors to Treatment,**
- **Referrals by Dental Hygienists.**

<https://www.cdhbc.com/Practice-Resources/Interpretation-Guidelines.aspx>

Woven throughout the report: *In Plain Sight* and the *Interpretation Guidelines* at the link above is the understanding that the current state of Indigenous health in BC, including reduced life expectancy, is a direct result of colonial history including policies and practices that caused and continue to cause vulnerabilities in social determinants of health. Medical and dental experiments on Indigenous children in residential schools have caused life-long health issues, exacerbated by experiences of racism and discrimination when seeking health care services. Please take the time to watch this video, "*My Dad's Unbelievable Story, Untold by Him*" produced by the First Nations Health Authority regarding one family's history with residential schools and dental abuse:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSfwDEIQVjM&feature=youtu.be>

It is highly recommended that all healthcare professionals in BC, regardless of practise setting, complete the San'Yas Indigenous Cultural Safety training program online. This program provides an excellent foundation of competency in Indigenous cultural safety and humility, and sets a strong foundation for continued learning in this area. Increased cultural safety competency among healthcare professionals leads to more culturally safe care, where everyone feels safe and respected while accessing health care services. CDHBC's initiatives in cultural safety contribute to the protection of the public. Available on the CDHBC website is the CDHBC 2020 Cultural Safety Initiatives Status Report which outlines past, present, and future CDHBC cultural safety initiatives:

<https://www.cdhbc.com/Professional-Development/Cultural-Safety-and-Humility/CDHBC-Cultural-Safety-Initiatives-Status-Report-20.aspx>