

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



2021

“Systemic racism and discrimination still very much exist in the field of medicine, on both the provider and the patient side. And diversity in medicine is critical to ensuring accessible, high-quality care. These issues impact the Black community, Indigenous populations, people of colour, LGBTQ2SIA+ and other marginalized groups. I encourage all of you to continue thinking about these issues, to challenge yourselves and others, to listen to patients and colleagues when they discuss these concerns, and to move toward a more equitable system for all.”



– Dr. Nancy Whitmore, Registrar and CEO - CPSO

Introduction

Discrimination in the healthcare system is a reality which cannot be ignored. With a mandate to serve in the public interest, and as an organization which strives to be accountable, respectful, responsive and communicate with compassion, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) appointed Dr. Saroo Sharda as our first Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) lead in January 2021 under the leadership and in collaboration with Fiona Hill-Hinrichs, Director of Communications. With the creation of this new role, CPSO began to consider what steps would meaningfully identify and address systemic discrimination, racism, inequity, and bias in our regulatory processes and in the broader healthcare system.

With strong support from CPSO senior leadership and Council, an ambitious, EDI strategy was developed and delivered. The areas of focus of the year-one strategy were implicit/unconscious bias and anti-Indigenous racism. According to Dr. Sarah Funnell as noted in a recent *CPSO Dialogue* article, Indigenous peoples have the worst health outcomes of any population group in Canada. A Wellesley Institute report, "First Peoples, Second Class Treatment,"

stated that racism and colonization fundamentally contribute to the alarming disparities in health between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. As outlined in *CPSO Dialogue*, we also focused on implicit bias because it works outside our awareness, without our knowledge and despite our best intentions. While physicians are committed to treating all their patients equally, it is important to understand that we all have biases, and if left unchecked, these can perpetuate health disparities, especially for marginalized patients.

A wide variety of coordinated, cross-divisional, and substantive work has taken place to raise awareness and begin to make an impact on these issues which we look forward to sharing with you in this report.

While this work is just beginning, as an organization, we are committed to an ongoing journey of learning and unlearning, and we are excited to share details of what we have accomplished in this first year. We are proud to be early adopters and leaders of this work among regulatory colleges.



Dr. Saroo Sharda MD MEd FRCPC is an anesthesiologist, medical educator, and leading voice for equity, diversity, anti-racism and anti-oppression in healthcare. She joined the College at the end of 2019 as a Medical Advisor, bringing with her clinical, academic and leadership experience. Her academic work is grounded in theories of power, hierarchy and identity formation. Along with her lived expertise as a woman of colour, training in narrative medicine, exceptional public speaking skills, and publications in the medical literature on racism in medicine, Dr. Sharda was an obvious choice for the inaugural EDI role. She has brought to work compassion, conviction and an ability to bring people together to better understand their role, as well as the roles of systems, in upholding discrimination and oppression. She wishes to acknowledge her own privilege as a cis-gender, straight, non-disabled, economically privileged physician as she continues to listen, learn and be reflexive in this work.



Dr. Amr Hamour, a resident in Otolaryngology — Head & Neck Surgery at the University of Toronto



“For years, tolerating racism or other bigotry from patients was just another part of a doctor’s job. But such allowances can do more harm than good — for everyone.”

eDialogue



A key channel for the CPSO is our quarterly publication, *eDialogue*. For the last five issues, the cover story has been dedicated to centering the voices, knowledge, and perspectives of equity-seeking providers, patients, and communities. In total, these articles have been read nearly 10,000 times on our website alone.

CPSO started to engage with online audiences with a new #CPSOEDI hashtag. This is a way of highlighting some of the current social and EDI-related issues that affect the public as well as physicians, provide resources and support to various under-represented groups, as well as inform our audiences of the latest CPSO initiatives within this space. We look forward to more discussions with our various stakeholders over the coming years.



Watch this IG Reel!

eDialogue Articles

cpsodialogue.ca

BLACK PATIENTS MATTER

(Sep. 2020)

TREATING ROOT CAUSES, NOT SYMPTOMS

(Dec. 2020)

IMPLICIT BIAS IN HEALTH CARE

(Dec. 2020)

WEIGHT BIAS AND ITS CLINICAL CONSEQUENCES

(Mar. 2021)

CARING FOR YOUR TRANS PATIENTS

(Jun. 2021)

TREATING PATIENT BIAS

(Sep. 2021)

Shannon Weber @shannon_weber

@cpso_ca feature article on how anti-Black racism and legacies are impacting health outcomes. When we consider the social determinants of health, are we really “in this together”?

Yipeng Ge @yipengGe

Great piece in the most recent @cpso_ca dialogue publication on addressing race-based health disparities (health harms of racism) and changes to med student recruitment and leadership change. & a feature on @chikastacypoet!

Web Stats

eDialogue

(Aug. 31, 2020 to Nov. 7, 2021)

79,996

TOTAL SITE TRAFFIC FOR PERIOD

EDI webpage

(Mar. 10, 2021 (launch) to Nov. 7, 2021)

1,448

PAGEVIEWS

0.03% of total site traffic (4,200,614)

Check out
our EDI
webpage
[here](#)



Black Patients Matter
(Sept. 2020)



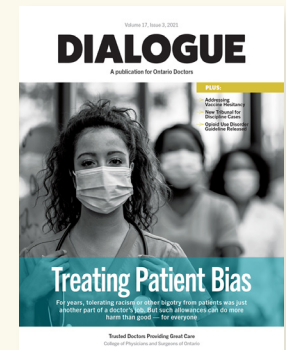
Treating Root Causes,
Not Symptoms (Dec. 2020)



Weight Bias and its Clinical
Consequences (Mar. 2021)



Caring for your Trans
Patients (Jun. 2021)



Treating Patient Bias
(Sep. 2021)

8,926

TOTAL NUMBER OF
PAGEVIEWS FOR THESE
COVER STORIES

Physician Engagement

Dr. Nancy Whitmore regularly communicates with the profession on various EDI initiatives, publications and current events.

These messages from the Registrar/CEO consistently receive a high open rate of over 60% (industry standard is 25%), with several

positive and engaging responses from physician members who belong to various fields, specialties, career-levels, and practice locations across the province.

Here are some of the [messages sent to our physician members](#) over the past year.

“As an effective regulator, we need to support our members as much as we can.”

- Dr. Nancy Whitmore



Education and Training

Council and Committees

In 2020, the Governance Committee initiated education on equity, diversity, and inclusion issues for its Committee. With the creation of an EDI role and strategy, a broader education and training program for all Committees and Council was initiated. Over the course of 2021, external guests held eight sessions for Council and our

Committees, sharing their expertise and lived experience of topics including unconscious bias, anti-Indigenous racism, privilege and allyship, and how we can embed an equity analysis into our work. These sessions were extremely well-received by attendees, with 96% reporting that they were satisfied or very satisfied.

96%

were satisfied with
Dr. Lisa Richardson's
Anti-Indigenous racism
session



Speaker

DR. JAVEED SUKHERA
Topic: Implicit Bias



Speaker

DR. LISA RICHARDSON
Topic: Anti-Indigenous Racism



Speaker

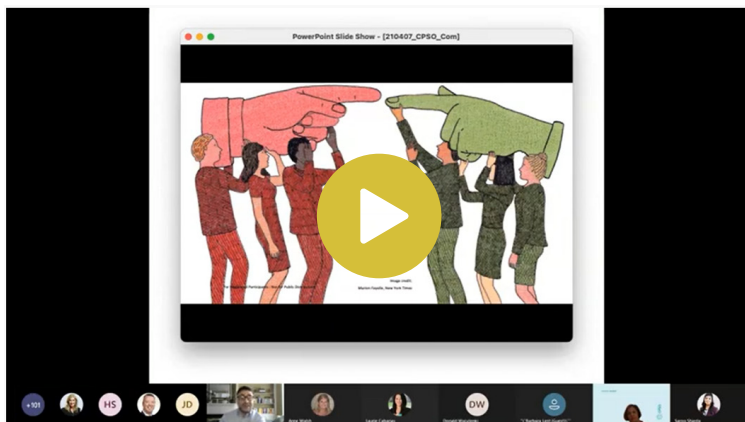
MS. ANNA DEWAR-GULLY
(TIDAL EQUALITY)
Topic: Equity Sequence



Speaker

DRS. NIXON AND CONNORS
Topic: Privilege and Allyship

Education clips



Dr. Javeed Sukhera discusses the impact of implicit bias in healthcare.



Dr. Lisa Richardson spoke about the importance of addressing systemic racism at the March 2021 Council Meeting.



As regulators, we aim to facilitate an environment of quality patient-centred health care for Indigenous patients and communities across Ontario.

Feedback

“The session was very powerful, profound and thought provoking, as well as timely and relevant... the leadership of the College is making such a difference and I am incredibly humbled to take this journey with you.” – Public Council Member

“Thank you for all you are doing around EDI. It is a huge...undertaking and is so important for our organization and beyond.” – Staff Member, Investigations and Resolutions

“I have attended other EDI-esque workshops, and this, by far, was the best one I have attended. I am very happy that I carved out the time to attend as it was so thought-provoking and insightful for me.”
– (Committee/Council member)

“I learned a tremendous amount particularly in how to think and approach privilege.”
– (Committee/Council member)

Governance Orientation Modules for new Council and Committee Members

“The whole program is excellent, comprehensive and relevant – best in class from my regulatory experience and working in the public interest. It is also great to see that the CPSO is playing a leadership role in promoting and educating participants about the importance of equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism/anti-oppression. Congratulations to everyone involved in creating this important e-learning governance program.”

A new Council and Committee Member Orientation program was developed to ensure that the public and physician members that serve on our Council and Committees get the necessary resources and training to embed equity, diversity, and inclusion in the work they do.

Decision-Making Questions to Think About

Will this decision serve the public interest, taking into account the diversity of the Ontario public?

Governance Orientation – A Day at Council 25 of 26

Resources

Indigenous Peoples:

- CanMEDS Family Medicine Indigenous Health Supplement
- RCPSG Indigenous Health in Specialty Postgraduate Medical Education Guide
- RCSPC Indigenous health: What you should know about being a culturally safe physician
- Sanyas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training

Anti-Black Racism:

- Black Experiences in Health Care Symposium
- Time to dismantle systemic anti-Black racism in medicine in Canada

LGBTQ2S+:

- My guide to caring for trans and gender-diverse clients Rainbow Health Ontario
- Caring For Our Diverse Populations (Chapter 12 Supporting LGBTQ2S+ People)

Governance Orientation – A Day at Council 26 of 26

Staff

Specific education and training opportunities were also offered to staff in divisions across CPSO. Overwhelmingly, the response was positive and staff reported that they would use these learnings in their everyday work. Specific education and training opportunities included:

- Over 200 College staff completed the multi-hour, facilitated **San'yas anti-racism Indigenous cultural safety training** program.
- Multiple departments completed the **Tidal Equality**, equity sequence training that provided concrete tools of how to embed an equity analysis into our work.
- The College's EDI Lead engaged with key College departments to share information on our EDI activities, seek feedback and answer questions.
- An "**EDI Corner**" was created on the intranet and featured articles, interviews, resources, and highlighted recent developments in EDI and healthcare.



People & Organizational Development:

In the spring, the People and Organizational Development team completed Equity Sequence training through Tidal Equality. The feedback has been very positive from the team. The Equity Sequence is a simple and intuitive tool. Following the training and education offered to staff, a review of CPSO's recruitment and onboarding practices was undertaken. The team has also engaged in a review and update of existing Human Resources policies, as well as the development of new and current policies and events through an equity lens.

"I just wanted to let you know how deeply moved I was by the latest EDI Corner piece on anti-Semitism. It was beautifully written, and really resonated with me on a personal level. Thank you to the authors for sharing their family stories."

"The training was an incredibly powerful resource which promoted both learning and un-learning on Indigenous culture. It has increased my self awareness and I will continue to evaluate how this learning can be employed in our engagement with and service to Indigenous people."

"I'm so grateful we were given the opportunity to take the San'yas course. It was incredibly eye-opening. The horrors of colonization and residential schools will break your heart. It's shocking that this material wasn't taught in school."

EDI Policy Updates

The Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) helps to bring the patient voice and perspective to healthcare regulation in Ontario. The CAG is made up of patients and caregivers from across the province and provides essential feedback on important regulatory issues, such as standards of practice, professional rules, policies, strategic priorities, and communications directed at the public. CPSO chairs the Citizen Advisory Group on behalf of a partnership of 21 health regulatory colleges. In 2021, consistent and determined efforts were made to diversify the group and recruiting focused on adding members from equity-seeking and underrepresented groups. This will continue into 2022 and beyond.

Policy staff and the EDI lead also worked with Nishnawbe Aski Nation during the review of the Complementary and Alternative Medicine policy. As a result of this consultation, Indigenous (and other) traditional medicines and traditional healing are now specifically mentioned in the policy.

New Land Acknowledgment

A new land acknowledgment was developed and presented to Council that recognized the role that health regulators may play in perpetuating colonization and racism, and the work needed to action reconciliation.

The land acknowledgement was supported by Council and well received by the broader community.



Dr. Saroo Sharda speaks about why acknowledging the land we live and work on is important.

“100% of participants in policy and governance said they would use the Equity Sequence in their everyday work (92% very likely, 8% somewhat likely)”

Patient Engagement and Public Consultations



One of CPSO’s key duties is to provide guidance to Ontario’s physicians on issues of professionalism and practice through the development of College policies. All CPSO policies are created through robust engagement and consultation with physicians and members of the public.

In the last year, efforts have been made to augment our public engagement efforts for policy consultations to seek feedback from equity-seeking groups and providers serving these communities.

Specifically:

As part of the review for the *Medical Assistance in Dying* and *Professional Obligations and Human Rights* policies, stakeholder summits were convened in order to seek feedback from stakeholders and enable open dialogue. These meetings had a diversity of participants, including those representing disabled, Indigenous, LGBTQ2S, elderly, and substance-using communities. Faith-based groups as well as those delivering mental health and addictions services, people living with obesity, sexual health services, and care for inner city health populations were also represented.

We thank all the organizations and individuals who participated yesterday at the #StakeholderSummit.

The major overarching theme of the virtual session was the importance of Patient-Centred Care in various settings. Great, insightful discussions and thoughtful remarks by participants, with some key takeaways:

- Health care providers’ self-reflection in order to identify their biases, their privilege/power that comes with their position, and how they can improve their patient’s experience.
- The need for clear #communication between doctors and patients (e.g., address any communication barriers like language), actively listening to patients’ needs, and taking the time to ask appropriate questions.
- Using patient narratives is important and an effective way to demonstrate “interactions done well” – this is what health care practitioners will remember.
- The importance of continuous learning and EDI work within #MedEd and medical practice, including the use and distribution of valuable resources and training programs for physicians, health care workers, and medical learners + meaningful engagement.

Investigations and Complaints

We know that patients from equity-seeking groups experience discrimination and bias in the healthcare system. One of CPSO's most important responsibilities is responding to concerns and investigating complaints involving Ontario doctors.

Specific training sessions were provided to the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC). Additionally, work was undertaken with Investigations and Resolutions leadership to create new processes for addressing complaints of discrimination and ensuring the ICRC has an understanding of the existence of unconscious bias and systemic discrimination.



- The creation of an **evidence-based library of anti-discrimination resources and literature** for investigators and ICRC members;
- Referring subject physicians to **EDI resources on our website**, and where appropriate, additional, and specific resources and/or specific education.
- Having the College's **EDI Lead be available to assist staff** in identifying relevant resources during investigations.

Kat Butler @heykatbutler

It was a privilege to be one of several trans researchers and clinicians interviewed for this! Here's the takeaway for clinicians: trans people will be your patients no matter what kind of medicine you practice, treat them with respect. #MedEd #TransHealth #TransMedTwitter

GCIndigenous @GCIndigenous


Racism. Prejudice. Bias. Stereotypes. They can, and do, kill. Systemic racism in health care needs to stop. Read more from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. #IndigenousHealth @cpso_ca

Dr. Onye Nnorom @OnyeActiveMD

Thank you @cpso_ca for amplifying our voices on the racism that Black patients & trainees experience in Canada!
@AKLofters @DrLisaRobinson @seanwharton @kwame_mckenzie @bmsacanada @uoftmedicine @thebpao @BlackHealthCAN @TAIBU_CHC @CMA_Docs @UofT_dlsph @JRJCHAIR @OntariosDoctors

Ximena Ramos Salas

@xramossalas
Thank you @cpso_ca for profiling the new Canadian Obesity Clinical Practice Guideline and for raising awareness about #weightbias and #Stigma @ObesityCan
@sflkirk @seanwharton @DrAlberga @IanPatton55 @DrSharma @MaryForhan @UConnRuddCenter @Cabps_Obesity



Dr. Lisa Richardson,
Vice-Chair, Culture & Inclusion
at the University of Toronto's
Department of Medicine

"I want to acknowledge this incredible work that you're doing. I want to acknowledge that you created space for me to have this conversation. Thinking about [alternative dispute resolution] and pathways, ways in which to make your organization more trusted and more safe. I think you are leading by doing this. I think you have the power to transform and to help some of the other regulators across the country. So, thanks for your commitment. Thanks for listening. Thanks for doing all the hard work that that you all do every day. Miigwetch!"

@AlikaMD Dr. Alika Lafontaine
So proud to see my colleague and
friend @RicharLisa on the cover of
[@cpso_ca](#) Dialogue.

Increasing Access to Our Patient and Public Help Centre

CPSO's Patient and Public Help Centre responds to nearly 50,000 calls from members of the public every year, answering questions and concerns about medical care and providing information to the public.

In 2021, the Patient and Public Help Centre became accessible in over 240 languages through the addition of a real-time audio interpretation service. Information about this new service was shared with system partners.



50,000

calls from stakeholders annually



Included the most commonly spoken **Indigenous languages** in ON

Patient and Public Help Centre now accessible in over

240 languages

Centrum pomocy dla pacjentów jest już dostępne

مریضوں کی مدد کا مرکز اب اردو میں دستیاب ہے

病人帮助中心，现提供“普通话”服务

Centro de ayuda para pacientes, ahora disponible en español

Collaboration, Engagement, and Partnerships

Central to CPSO's EDI work has been the collaboration, engagement, and development of partnerships between CPSO and system partners.

Guest speaking & appearances

CPSO's EDI Lead has been called upon by other regulators to assist with their EDI initiatives and has been invited to present to a number of external presentations on EDI, including:

PRESENTATIONS

- Health Professions Regulators of Ontario (HPRO)
- Coalition for Physician Enhancement
- New and Evolving Academic Leaders (NEAL) Program, University of Toronto
- Canadian Association of Medical Education
- Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians
- Equity in Medicine
- Various hospital forums
- McMaster Program for Faculty Development
- RAFT Leadership Course for Women In Medicine



PODCASTS AND INTERVIEWS

- McMaster program for faculty development Spark podcast
- Ontario's Anesthesiologists (a section of the Ontario Medical Association)
- Medical Post
- Gritty Nurse Podcast

FMRAC and Federal Government

CPSO EDI Lead played a key role in the anti-discrimination working group at the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FMRAC), which recently released a statement on anti-Indigenous racism, calling all regulators to action.

The College was an active participant at the Government of Canada's meetings on anti-Indigenous racism in healthcare. We participated in small group breakouts and brought the themes back to inform our EDI work at the CPSO.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Significant work has also been undertaken to strengthen and build partnerships with healthcare system partners and advocacy organizations.

- **Ontario Medical Association**
- **Obesity Canada**
- **Doctors with Disabilities**
- **Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada**
- **Health Professions Regulators of Ontario**
- **Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada**
- **Black Physicians Association of Ontario**
- **The 519**
- **Rainbow Health Ontario**

GCIndigenous @GCIndigenous

Racism. Prejudice. Bias. Stereotypes. They can, and do, kill. Systemic racism in health care needs to stop. Read more from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. [#IndigenousHealth @cpso_ca](#)

Yipeng Ge @yipengGe

Love to see this. We have to treat the root causes of health disparities - colonialism, systemic racism, structural violence and oppression. Thank you for your resilient and tireless leadership [@RicharLisa](#) and [@docsfun](#). Kudos to [@cpso_ca](#) for giving space for this.

RainbowHealthOntario

[@RainbowHealthOn](#)
Honoured to be a part of this discussion from [@cpso_ca!](#)



Working Together

CPSO is also in discussions regarding a relationship accord with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN). The objective of the Accord is to guide the partnership between NAN and CPSO as NAN proceeds with their Health Transformation process and allows both parties to develop mutually supported initiatives to allow the NAN territory to build capacity and transform the experiences for the First Nations people within the health system.

CPSO is currently exploring a potential partnership with a large Ontario Hospital to support their EDI Quality Initiative Partnership project.

Moving Forward...

It has been an extraordinary first year for EDI at the College. As the regulator of Ontario's physicians, we chose to make EDI a priority for our organization. Our vision is Trusted Doctors Providing Great Care – and equity in health care is critical to ensuring barriers are removed and access to quality health care is available to all.

We listened and learned, and we achieved more than we thought possible in this first year, even amidst the complexities of the virtual world in which many of us found ourselves working. None of the progress we have made would have been possible without the unwavering commitment and support of our Council and Senior Leadership team.

There's still a long road ahead and much to be done. The work of equity and justice is everyone's responsibility. We are proud to be leading this work as a regulator and we are committed to continuing to have important disruptive conversations and facilitating change in this space.

We are immensely grateful to those with lived expertise and experience, who have worked with us and contributed to our understanding of the harm that occurs when truly equitable and culturally safe practices are not in place.

In the year ahead, our focus will be on anti-Black racism and LGBTQ2SIA+ issues. Above all, we remain committed to our vision and ensuring that our processes and regulatory activities serve the needs of all Ontarians, including those who have been historically marginalized within the healthcare system.



@cpso_ca #CPSOEDI

www.cpso.on.ca/EDI

Feedback or questions?

E-mail: EDI@cpso.on.ca