



## **CAPWHN STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO RACISM**

### **October 14, 2020**

The Canadian Association of Perinatal and Women's Health Nurses (CAPWHN) is a national organization that promotes excellence in nursing practice, education, leadership and research in perinatal and women's health (CAPWHN, 2017). As an organization, we are committed to ensuring the highest quality standard of care for childbearing families, including upholding the principles of justice by safeguarding human rights, equity, gender inclusivity and fairness with childbearing persons, families, and newborns.

Recent events in the United States and Canada have underscored the importance of focusing our efforts on the entrenched racism, social injustices, and disparities that continue to exist, not only in perinatal care settings but all of society. In light of these events, the Advocacy and Health Policy Committee of CAPWHN, which authored the CAPWHN Position Statement "Cultural Safety and Humility" in 2017, identified the need to lend the voice of CAPWHN to support national messages acknowledging the issue of systemic racism in Canada.

On June 11, 2020, the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) published a news release entitled "[Anti-Black racism is a public health emergency in Canada](#)" in response to the tragic death of an African American man in the U.S. More recently, we have borne witness to the systemic racism and discrimination in healthcare exhibited by the death of an Atikamekw woman who died in Québec. [CNA and the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association \(CINA\) responded to this tragedy with a joint statement about systemic anti-Indigenous racism](#). Anti-racism efforts are needed across all provincial and national boundaries and in all avenues including justice, education, and health. CNA President Claire Betker highlighted the role nursing has played in upholding systemic racism and injustices and committed to moving forward with a goal of eliminating systemic racism, inequity, and oppression. Michael Villeneuve, Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), stated "CNA condemns all forms of racism and discrimination. The CNA Code of Ethics demands that we uphold principles of justice by safeguarding human rights, equity, and fairness. We have rested too comfortably for too long on a myth that anti-Black racism is not systemic in Canada, but the reality has been harshly exposed."

Addressing structural and institutionalized racism and health disparities is critical to CAPWHN, its members and the people we care for. The Perinatal Nursing Standards in Canada (Canadian Association of Perinatal and Women's Health Nurses, 2018) establishes the core Values and [Guiding Principles for Perinatal Nursing in Canada](#) which mirror the CNA Code of Ethics. As an organization of perinatal and women's health care providers, we endorse the position of the Canadian Nurses Association and call for members to refocus their efforts in creating anti-racist health care environments in which childbearing people can feel safe from racism and violence in order to improve experiences with the health system and improve health outcomes.