

Message to the community:

As an organization, Western Ottawa is committed to addressing systemic inequities and as such, we condemn the persistent and systemic anti-Black racism that undermines the safety and well-being of Black Communities in the United States and Canada. We stand in solidarity with Black communities seeking justice. Black Lives Matter.

Canada is not immune to Anti-Black racism. We mourn Regis Korchiniski-Paquet who died last week in Toronto. We remember Andrew Loku, Abdirahman Abdi and D'Andre Campbell. In 2017, a coroner's jury made 30 recommendations after the fatal shooting of Andrew Loku, and many of those recommendations have failed to be implemented.

We recognize systemic oppressions based on race, and the ways they intersect with class, gender, sexual orientation, gender orientation, immigration status, religion, mental health status, age, and ability. Many forms of interlocking systems of oppression are mutually enforcing and cannot be addressed in isolation. Therefore, the struggle against anti-Black racism is integrated with the struggles against other forms of inequities. Any struggle against oppression must be informed by an anti-racist framework.

Black communities in Canada – not just in the United States – continue to be over-policed and criminalized. Poverty is racialized and has impacts on well-being and access to the determinants of health. Black women are over-represented in precarious employment, contributing to ongoing disparities which COVID-19 has highlighted.

Anti-Black racism causes suffering and humiliation that has far-reaching consequences. It prevents equality in opportunity, access to asylum, immigration opportunities, education, jobs, housing, health care and social services and limits participation in decision-making bodies.

Western Ottawa will continue to advocate for change in an inclusive and informed way respecting the lived experiences of the communities we work with. We are one of many voices denouncing inequitable practices and resource distribution, creating systemic barriers for Black communities. We will continue prioritizing our focus on marginalized community members and calling for structural change.

**With thanks from the statements from Access Alliance Multicultural Health Services, and Black Health Leaders statement at Alliance for Healthier Communities from whom we have adapted our organizational statement*

WOCRC Board of Directors and Staff