

Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians Statement on Racism

For Immediate Release

Ottawa, ON: June 8, 2020

The Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians (CAEP) joins with all those who believe in a just society in strongly condemning the acts of violence and underlying systemic racism that disproportionately affect Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC). Emergency departments (EDs) in Canada must reflect on the ways in which their own practices contribute to discrimination and advocate for global systemic change in the unfair treatment of BIPOC patients.

Recent events in the United States, including the brutal killings of George Floyd and first-responder Breonna Taylor, have shocked and horrified the emergency medicine community. In Canada, although health care is a fundamental right and EDs are open to all people, we recognize that not every patient receives the same care. Unconscious biases and systemic racism exist in our country and our hospitals as well. They contribute to higher incidences of disease in BIPOC communities and inequitable care within the health care system.

Emergency departments see the results of inequities in the public health and justice systems on a daily basis, manifested in addiction, violence, infectious disease, and a myriad of other differential health outcomes. COVID-19 is a stark, but unsurprising, reminder of the differential disease incidence, treatment and outcomes in specific communities. This cannot be allowed to continue; racism must be recognized and treated as the public health emergency that it is.

Earlier this year, the CAEP Board of Directors declared its commitment to diversity and inclusivity as overarching values, to be integrated into all its strategic goals. In the wake of the escalation of violence against BIPOC people, we are committed to redoubling our efforts, including support for education and training to promote awareness of inequities in health care, research into disparities in the treatment of BIPOC patients, and organizational change that listens and learns from BIPOC communities.

CAEP will hold itself accountable to its members, patients, trainees and the public as we work towards these goals, and continue to advocate for a more just society, where every member of our BIPOC communities can live a physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy life, and expect timely and optimal care in the event of unexpected illness or injury.

***** If you would like more information, please contact Christina Bova at 613-523- 3343 x17 (office), or email at cbova@caep.ca**