



#05 First Peoples :: 2nd Class Treatment

Why Was This Document Created?

Stories about Indigenous health often perpetuate racist stereotypes and inaccuracies pervasive in mainstream Canadian narratives.

This document was created to highlight the voices and perspectives of Indigenous people themselves and provides the context necessary to understand stories about Indigenous health.



Key Messages:

- 💡 Stories about Indigenous health in Canada in mainstream society are frequently simplified and presented without context. For example, epidemiological data is often gathered and shared without consideration of historical and present-day impacts of colonial policies on the social determinants of health (i.e. access to education, housing, food insecurity, employment).
- 💡 These stories are generally not authored by Indigenous peoples themselves.
- 💡 Barriers to accessing health care include limitations to the Non-insured Health Benefits Program (NIHB), such as the requirement for on-reserve residency status for some services, cutbacks to medications and treatments, and an onerous approval process.
- 💡 Indigenous peoples believe that their Indigenous identity and socioeconomic status might result in a lack of credibility and/or negatively influence their chances of receiving help.
- 💡 Racism in the Canadian health care system can be fatal, as it can lead to poor quality or denial of care in emergency situations, for example; in the case of Brian Sinclair ... see information sheet (#01 Brian Sinclair Report - 2015).

What Actions Can I Take as a Healthcare Provider?

1. Take the health concerns of Indigenous patients seriously and not dismiss them due to stereotypes about Indigenous patients.
2. Implement and enforce a triage system that is not based on stereotypes about Indigenous peoples.
3. Hold all colleagues accountable to high quality standard of care for all patients. This includes following the same diagnostic and treatment protocols for all patients.
4. Be aware of the limitations of the NIHB Program and other funding programs, i.e. Jordan's Principle, to support Indigenous patient care ... see information sheet (#02 Jordan's Principle - 2018)