



Indigenous Nurses Day 2021

A message from Valerie Jefferd, NNPBC Indigenous Director, NP Councillor

On behalf of NNPBC, I am pleased to wish everyone a happy Indigenous Nurses Day!

Each year we celebrate Indigenous Nurses Day, this year on May 10th, in recognition of the hard-working Indigenous nurses across Canada, and to acknowledge the important ways in which Indigenous nurses contribute to health and wellbeing. By incorporating traditional knowledge and healing methods into practice and education, Indigenous nurses meet the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of our communities. This is a vital connection between our heritage and our health, and to laying the path to healing for all Indigenous people.

In late 2020, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond released her report entitled "In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care." This report highlights distressing, troubling and deeply rooted problems with our system. The information compiled belies issues so ingrained that they sadly have become part of the reality of interacting with health care for Indigenous people. The report concludes without any shadow of a doubt that the vast majority of Indigenous people (84%) have experienced racism and/or discrimination in the health care system, and that this racism has negatively and disproportionately impacted the health outcomes of Indigenous people.

Today on Indigenous Nurses Day, I hope that we may all take time to recognize the amazing work of Indigenous nursing leaders who work to eradicate the conditions that perpetuate racism while also providing culturally safe care. Together we can lead the change in health care in this country.

I wish you all a Happy Indigenous Nurses Day – be safe and be well.

Valerie Jefferd, NP

NNPBC Indigenous Director