

March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021

## **Re: Statement on the Release of Manitoba's Disaggregated Race, Ethnicity, and Indigeneity Data**

Today, the Province of Manitoba released disaggregated COVID-19 race, ethnicity, and Indigeneity data. This is an important step forward in reaching health equity by understanding which communities the pandemic is affecting the most. When armed with accurate information, stakeholders can identify and eliminate inequities by creating effective policies to protect and build healthy, stronger and more resilient communities.

This data clearly shows the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on First Nations, Metis, Inuit, Filipino, South Asian, African, Latin American, and other racialized communities. This data is not the result of race, not the result of behaviour, not a result of failing to follow public health orders. This data is a result of systemic racism and health inequalities that have put First Nations, Metis, Inuit, Black, and racialized communities at higher risk of being infected by COVID-19.

As the Province's report highlights the risk of being infected by COVID-19 may be increased through:

- exposures to COVID-19 through employment such as occupations that are direct service provision or considered essential work; part time work without paid sick time or benefits;
- some underlying health conditions;
- overcrowded or inadequate housing or experiencing house-lessness;
- stress from racism, discrimination and economic and social disadvantage; and
- barriers to accessing health care and social services.

Structural inequities of society have placed First Nations, Metis, Inuit, Black, and racialized communities at a disadvantage from the start of the pandemic. These communities experience discrimination in health care settings; they have their health concerns undervalued and are medically stigmatized. They face higher rates of environmental and economic barriers to accessing health care and social services. Systemic racism and discrimination have also resulted in First Nations, Metis, Inuit, Black, racialized communities experiencing higher rates of poverty, less access to quality housing, and food insecurity. These communities have additionally been more exposed to precarious and unsafe working conditions. All of which has increased their risk of COVID-19.

Despite these experiences of inequality, racialized Manitobans are resilient. Many of them are essential workers; they are the healthcare workers working countless hours in hospitals, they are supporting our loved ones in personal care homes, they are teaching children in schools, they are producing the food we eat, they are delivering the mail, and they are providing needed community support for the most vulnerable populations in our Province. They have been putting their lives at risk, yet have received less protection.

The release of this data must result in action from our Provincial Government, decision makers, and health care systems to openly and vigorously address the underlying causes of these inequalities and effectively allocate resources to the communities hit hardest by the pandemic. Public health information, economic support, healthcare services, and the Province's immunization plan must be equitably developed and delivered to address the disproportionate impact on First Nations, Metis, Inuit, Black, and racialized communities. This will benefit our community and Province as a whole.

Moving forward, to prevent further the impact of COVID-19 on First Nations, Metis, Inuit, Black, and racialized communities and to address the underlying structural inequities, the Province must sincerely listen, meaningfully engage, and act on the guidance of impacted communities in creating policies that will

protect these communities. We ask that the Province continue to share this data on an ongoing basis and share further data on the severity of COVID-19 illness as it relates to racialized communities.

Finally, it is of utmost importance that this data is not used to further stigmatize impacted communities, nor that it leads to further policing or surveillance of these communities. The Province, and all Manitobans, have a responsibility to ensure that only equitable policy and program changes and improved health outcomes result from the release of this data, not further stigmatization and racism.

Statement from the Province of Manitoba: <https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/?archive=&item=50893>

Link to report: [COVID-19 Infections in Manitoba: Race, Ethnicity, and Indigeneity](#).

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## Background

Immigration Partnership Winnipeg is a local immigration partnership in Winnipeg; we are hosted by the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg and governed by a council of community leaders from a diversity of sectors. Our objective is to build an inclusive and welcoming community for newcomers, immigrants and refugees in the city.

Together with over 54 partners across the Province, we have been running a COVID-19 anti-racism public awareness campaign since May, entitled “Manitobans: COVID-19 Doesn’t Discriminate. Nor Should You!”. The campaign has been focused on bringing awareness of the racism, discrimination and xenophobia experienced by racialized communities and newcomers due to COVID-19.

On February 18, IPW together with 40 other organizations sent a [letter](#) to the Honourable Heather Stefanson, Minister of Health and Seniors Care and the Honourable Audrey Gordon, Minister of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery calling for the release of Manitoba’s Disaggregated COVID-19 Race, Ethnicity and Indigeneity Data.

For more information on our campaign:

- Website: <https://www.ipwinnipeg.org/dontdiscriminatemb>.
- Facebook: Manitobans: COVID-19 Doesn’t Discriminate. Nor Should You. | @DontDiscriminateMB
- Instagram: @DontDiscriminateMB

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