

HSAA stands in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement

As an individual with white privilege, I recognize that the issues raised by BLM are not my own. However, I am listening and trying to learn, and my hope is that other HSAA members are doing the same. At this moment in history, it is my responsibility to speak up in support of the Black and Indigenous communities and affirm our desire to work towards repairing what has historically been a fractured relationship.

Racism is a different kind of pandemic that has infiltrated our homes, our communities and our workplaces. Racialized People, People of Colour, Indigenous and Métis People have been hurt by systems which are set up to dehumanize and “other” them. Just last week, a 29-year-old Indigenous-Black woman from Toronto, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, died under questionable circumstances after Toronto police were called to get her into a mental health treatment facility. When HSAA members hear this report, we understand that we are very much on the front lines of this fight. We hear countless stories of patients, clients, family and friends who need help and are simply unable to attain the supports they need. As health-care professionals, we see every day how racism impacts the way People of Colour experience the health-care system. Health matters to all of us. Our ability to access care should not change dependent on the colour of our skin.

To our members who have been particularly impacted by racism I want to say: I see you; I hear you; I want to do better to support your experience. To Black and Indigenous members of the public, thank you for drawing our attention to our systemic failures. We pledge to do better.

I challenge all HSAA members of all races, to listen, to hear, and to act in unity with our Black and Indigenous neighbours. You might not have all the answers, and you might feel uncomfortable. That’s okay. Black and Indigenous folks have felt that way for a long time. We have lived in passivity for too long with injustice – and we must each act now, to end it.

In conclusion, I’d like to quote my colleague and friend, Jason MacLean, President of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union and a leader in the Black community in his province: ***“Let this moment in history be the first step towards a new way of life, one that leads to a healthier, happier future for all humankind.”***



Mike Parker,
HSAA President