



Conference Report

**A Report Prepared for and Submitted to Social
Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)**

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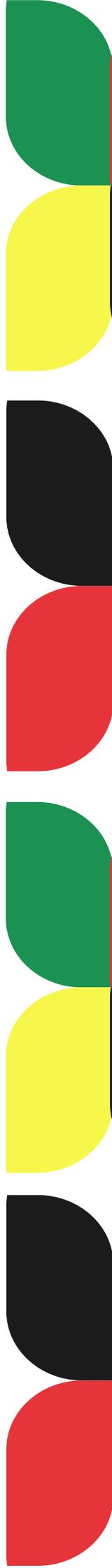
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The Conference Planning Committee would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their support and guidance.

CONFERENCE FUNDERS

- SSHRC Connection Grant
- Dalhousie University President
- Faculty of Health, Dalhousie University
- Healthy Populations Institute (HPI), Dalhousie University
- Health Association of African Canadians (HAAC)
- African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent Coalition (ANSDPAD)
- Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW)
- Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness
- Nova Scotia Department of Equity and Anti-Racism
- Nova Scotia Health Public Health
- Office of Mental Health and Addictions, Nova Scotia Health, Province of Nova Scotia.
- Office of Healthcare Professional Recruitment, Province of Nova Scotia.
- IWK Health
- Faculty of Medicine, Health and Dentistry, Dalhousie University
- Nova Scotia College of Social Workers
- Promoting Leadership in Health for African Nova Scotians (PLANS)

VENUE

Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel
Hotel Event Planner, Candace Perry

EVENT PLANNER

Keisha Pinto of Keisha Pinto Events

PLANNING COMMITTEE

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SSHRC CONNECTION GRANT TEAM

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CONFERENCE HOST

Dr. Barb Hamilton-Hinch

CONFERENCE CO-LEADS

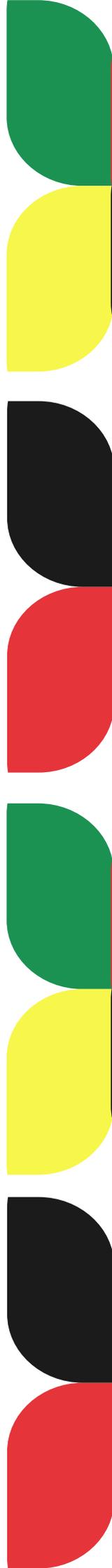
- Bernadette Hamilton-Reid (DPAD)
- Vanessa Fells (DPAD)

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Sharon Davis-Murdoch (Health Strategy Working Group – DPAD)

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- Dr. Ingrid Waldron, HOPE Chair in Peace and Health, Global Peace and Social Justice Program, McMaster University
- Improving the Health Outcomes of People of African Descent Flagship Project, Healthy Populations Institute (HPI), Dalhousie University
- African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent Coalition (DPAD)
- Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW)
- Black Cultural Centre of Nova Scotia (BCC)
- Health Association of African Canadians (HAAC)



Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that The International Black Health Conference was held in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw people, which is covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship signed with the British Crown in 1725.

We continually remind ourselves that the treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but, in fact, recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

We must all take time to reflect on the inequities caused by historic and ongoing violence against, and oppression, of Indigenous peoples, as well as the African Nova Scotia community and others who have been marginalized on this land.

African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent Coalition Affirmation

The African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent Coalition (DPAD) acknowledges and requests the presence of Mother Afrika and our ancestors whose teachings, strength and perseverance continue to challenge and inspire our community.

DPAD recognizes that African Nova Scotians are a distinct founding people in Nova Scotia who have been a key part of the province's culture and history.

We acknowledge the histories, contributions and legacies of the African Nova Scotian people and communities who have been here for over 400 years.



Executive Summary

The International Black Health Conference, held in Halifax, Nova Scotia from October 6th–8th, 2022 gathered a diverse local, interprovincial, and international audience (approximately 450 attendees) including academics, health providers, policymakers, and community members, students, and youth. The purpose of this conference was to discuss Black health and how to improve health outcomes across the diversity of people of African ancestry globally.

The Conference featured three keynote speakers, several plenaries, table talks, thought-provoking presentations and discussions which were connected by a common thread of structural determinants of health, including the impact of anti-Black racism and health inequities. It was a space for difficult and necessary conversations, where hope and action for change stemmed from.

Fifteen table-talks were held, where attendees were grouped to discuss a previously selected topic, moderated by a discussant with expertise on the subject. Notes were taken from the table talk conversations and the main learnings are presented in this report containing diverse perspectives on important Black health issues.

These learnings can guide the actions of different sectors (academics, clinicians, policymakers) to address priority issues that need action now and that are long overdue. It is everyone's right, regardless of race, to reach their full health potential and to receive high-quality care that is appropriate to them and their needs.



Conference Overview

The International Black Health Conference (IBHC) was the first of its kind in Canada and represented an unprecedented opportunity for a local, national, and international gathering for the sole purpose of improving Black health outcomes across the African Diaspora, informing clinical practice, policy change, showcasing achievements and promising practices. The three-day conference was held October 6 – 8, 2022 at the Halifax Marriott Harbourfront in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Conference funding was used to support: 1) a three-day conference designed for academics, clinicians, policymakers and public audiences; 2) graduate student training and mentorship; 3) project evaluation; 4) partnership development; and 5) knowledge mobilization. It engaged a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral group of individuals, including professors, researchers, students, clinicians, health policymakers, community-based organizations, and Black Nova Scotian communities.

Overall Project Goal

The overall goal of the conference was to develop a conference report outlining best practice approaches for identifying and leveraging strategic multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral partnerships and targeted knowledge mobilization approaches that address health disparities in diverse Black Nova Scotian communities through research, clinical services, health policy, and community mobilization. The main audiences for this project included educators, researchers, students, clinicians, policymakers, community-based organizations, and Black Nova Scotian communities.

Project Objectives

The four main conference objectives were: 1) To bring together diverse sectors (including professionals and community members) to engage in a dialogue on best practice approaches, addressing health disparities in the diverse African diaspora and Black Nova Scotian communities; 2) To train and mentor graduate students to engage with new ways of conceptualizing, conducting research on, and addressing health disparities in these communities; 3) To identify and leverage collaborative partnerships among diverse professionals at and beyond the symposium to address health disparities in the African diaspora and Black Nova Scotian communities; and 4) To identify and use diverse and creative knowledge mobilization tools and strategies that will mobilize knowledge from the project in ways that will target and encourage professors, researchers, students, clinicians, health policymakers, community organizations, and Black Nova Scotian communities to act on and address health disparities in Black Nova Scotian communities through research, clinical services, health policy, and community mobilization.

Health Disparities in Black Communities: What the Literature Reveals

Emerging studies over the last two decades have provided strong evidence that Black Canadians are disproportionately impacted by inequities in almost every social institution. For example, research conducted by members of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant team (Principal Applicant Dr. Waldron, Co-Applicants Dr. Hamilton-Hinch and Ms. Iduye, and Collaborator Ms. Watson) have examined various structural inequities that led to poor health outcomes in Black Nova Scotian communities for multiple dimensions of health including cardiovascular and mental health. (Bernard & Hamilton-Hinch, 2006; Bernard & Hamilton-Hinch, 2015; Gaszo, McDaniel & Waldron, 2016; Hamilton-Hinch, 2016;

Hamilton-Hinch, Harkins, & Seselja, 2017; Iduye, 2018; Jackson, McGibbon & Waldron 2013; McGibbon, Waldron & Jackson 2013; McIntyre & Hamilton-Hinch, 2016; Waldron, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2015, 2018, 2019; Waldron & Gazso, 2017; Watson, 2009).

Other studies indicate that African Nova Scotians and other Black Canadians are disproportionately impacted by structural determinants of health, including employment, with lower income and increased poverty (Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre 2007; Bourgeois, Edmunds, Awan, Jonah, Varsaneux & Siu, 2016; Etowa, Bernard, Oyinsan & Clow, 2007; Logie, James, Tharao, & Loutfy, 2013; Saulnier, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2017), education, with a lower likelihood of finishing high school or attending university (African Nova Scotian Affairs n.d.; Statistics Canada 2011; Waldron, 2018), and are over-represented in the criminal justice system (Auld, 2017; Luck, 2016). Immigrant and refugee communities in Nova Scotia and Canada experience what is often referred to as the “healthy immigrant effect,” a concept used to describe the decline in their health and mental health status after their arrival in Canada due to their experiences with various structural inequities (Kirmayer et al., 2011).

More broadly, work by Jonathan Metzl, Helena Hansen, and others (Hansen & Metzl, 2016; Hansen & Metzl, 2017; Metzl, 2012; Metzl & Hansen, 2014; Reading, 2015; Solar & Irwin, 2010) highlight the importance of analyzing and addressing health disparities through a structural— rather than simply a social — determinants of health framework because the former is better able to capture colonialism and the many other structurally rooted factors impacting health beyond simply the social. Structural determinants are deeply embedded, representing historical, political, ideological, economic, and social foundations from which all other determinants evolve. Structural determinants include the social and political mechanisms that generate socioeconomic and other divisions in society, that define the individual socioeconomic

position within hierarchies of power, prestige, and access to resources. Structural determinants also cause and operate through intermediary determinants of health, such as housing, physical work environment, social support, stress, nutrition, and physical activity—to shape health outcomes (Solar & Irwin, 2010). Jonathan Metzl delivered a keynote presentation at the conference and these ideas provided a framework for the discussions that followed during the conference.

Conference Activities

As mentioned earlier, the project involved: 1) a three-day conference; 2) graduate student training and mentorship; 3) project evaluation; 4) partnership development; and 5) knowledge mobilization. The SSHRC grant team (which included Dr. Waldron and members of the Healthy Populations Institute at Dalhousie University) organized the conference in collaboration with several partners, including African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent, Health Association of African Canadians, Association of Black Social Workers, and the Black Cultural Centre of Nova Scotia.

International Black Health Conference 2022

Day 1: Thursday, 6th October, 2022

The opening reception was held at the Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel and the conference MC was Dr. Barb Hamilton-Hinch. Beginning with a land acknowledgment, intonation of the Black National Anthem, and an African Libation ceremony performed by Wayne Hamilton. Welcome words were presented by representatives of the partnering organizations of the organizing committee (DPAD, ABSW, HAAC, HPI), and followed by opening remarks by distinguished guests from the provincial government. The first academic keynote speaker to present was Dr. Notisha Massaquoi (Assistant Professor in the Department of

Health and Society at the University of Toronto, Scarborough), who spoke about the intricacies of her work in the Black community especially on her role in improving women's health in Toronto.

Day 2: Friday, 7th October, 2022

Day two of the conference kicked off with a keynote presentation from Dr. Jonathan Metzel (the Frederick B. Rentschler II Professor of Sociology and Psychiatry, and the Director of the Center for Medicine, Health, and Society, at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee). Dr. Jude Mary Cenat (Associate Professor in the School of Psychology, Director of the Vulnerability, Trauma, Resilience & Culture (V-TRaC) Research Laboratory at the University of Ottawa) gave a presentation on the Interdisciplinary Centre for Black Health. Conference participants pre-registered to attend different table talks. Each table talk was held in a different breakout room and was led by a discussant with expertise in the following topics:

- Gender Violence
- Health Education
- Health Policy
- Health Research
- Health Services
- Mental Health

Table talks were café-like discussions that lasted 70 mins. Discussants introduced the topic and had a set of questions to guide the conversation towards a solution-based discussion. Each session also had a note-taker recording the main points from each discussion which are presented in the “Best Practice Approaches for Addressing Health Disparities in Black Communities” section of this report. In the second half of the day, there was a plenary with graduate students

and recent graduates that briefly (2 minutes) introduced their work and research interest in issues of Black health, before launching into a discussion about the challenges and opportunities of conducting path-breaking work within the academy as Black scholars invested in the health and wellbeing of their communities. Finally, there were two presentations on Ontario-based projects featuring The Neighbourhood Group Community Service and LAMP Community Health Centre.

Day 3: Saturday, 8th October, 2022

Michelle Williams started off the day giving a short presentation on the historical context of the African Nova Scotian community. The keynote speaker was Dr. Gwenetta Curry (Lecturer of Race, Ethnicity, and Health at the Usher Institute, University of Edinburgh). This was followed by community-based table talks on key topics such as justice, housing, education, immigration, employment, and spirituality that were moderated by community leaders. Dorene O'Marde gave a presentation on reparations. This was followed by two sessions highlighting Nova Scotian projects, community table-talks and a Black health professionals' plenary session.

Student Training and Mentorship

Two graduate student trainees – Rachael Sonola, a master's student in the Professional Master's Diploma (PMDip) in Dietetics at Toronto Metropolitan University and Nicole Brown, a master's student in the Public Administration Program at Dalhousie University, were trained and mentored by the principal applicant and co-applicants for the duration of the project from April 2022 to the end of April 2023. The students supported the project in the following ways: helping in organizing the conference, coordinating note taking during the conference, attending monthly team meetings, helping to develop partnerships, knowledge mobilization (report, articles) and evaluation.

Project Evaluation

Evaluation of the conference was based on the feedback forms provided to conference participants on October 8, 2022, via email.

The pre-feedback form included the following questions with 59 responses.

1. Which demographic best describes how you are attending the conference?
 - Student, Social Worker, Research Scientist, Community, Health Care Professional, Government Representative, Physician, Teacher, Nursing Student, Sponsor
2. What are you hoping to learn from the conference about health outcomes in diverse Black communities in Canada and globally?
 - What is taking place within our communities, new resources, services, and programs in terms of our health. Also looking forward to networking
 - Working in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), I am looking forward to Canadian policies, strategies for Human Resources (HR) employment to include more Black folks
 - From the conference, I am hoping to learn about health outcomes in diverse Black communities in Canada and globally of ways to ensure patients who identify as Black receive adequate, culturally safe, and consistent health care.
 - How to support my community
 - To better understand the issues facing our community
 - Hear some suggestions as to how the disparities can be overcome
 - I am hoping to learn that appropriate funding will be provided to the organizations who are taking the time to do the work of collecting desegregated data and statistics. I am hoping to learn how our health care system is taking a proactive stance to

recognize and address the existing poor health outcomes of Black Canadians, Black Indigenous, and Black Immigrant/residents.

- I would like to learn what is already being done to help provide better health care to Black people

3. What part of the conference are you most looking forward to?

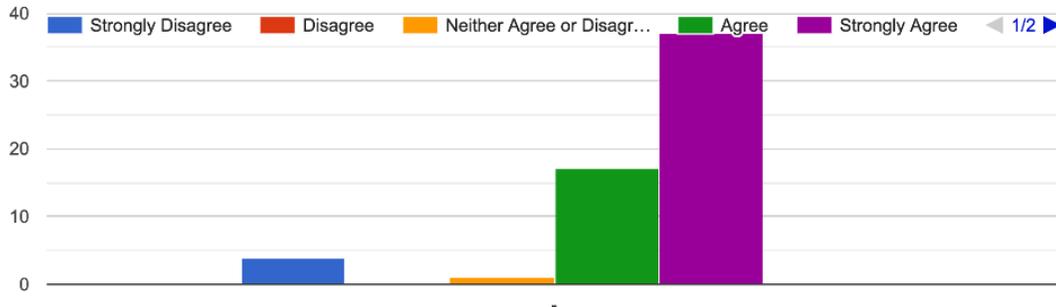
- Group discussions and collaborations
- Networking, hearing about people's work, keynote speaker
- All of it, for us by us!
- Guest speakers and networking opportunities
- Networking
- The education

4. What skills do you hope to take away from the conference?

- New knowledge on Black communities' health, research approaches.
- Research skills, critical thinking skills.
- Improve my networking and social skills.
- Functional knowledge on what to do differently to support the population.
- Deeper knowledge of the diversity among black communities in Nova Scotia.
- Awareness and advocacy.

5. Do you think this conference will provide valuable information you will want to share with others in your organizations/community? (See Below Table – Based on 59 responses)

Do you think this conference will provide valuable information you will want to share with others in your organization/community?



The Day 1 and 2 Feedback Form – Mid Conference included the following questions with 18 responses:

1. What was your favourite part of the conference so far?

- Keynote was one of the best ever, and I have heard many.
- The entertainment - drumming, Interruptive dance and songs performed!
- The speakers are phenomenal. The libation was incredible. The volunteers and the hosts could not be more welcoming. The food was excellent. The vendors had great offerings.
- Dr. Notisha M and Dr. Jonathan M were incredible speakers and the table talk sessions. Also loved the movement breaks, food, and thoughtfulness of having metro transit covered.

2. What was your least favourite part of the conference so far?

- Lack of breaks between speakers. Need more time to digest information.
- Confusion re: the schedule leading up to the day of the conference made it hard to figure out work commitments and keep people informed.

- There was one student who was part of the Plenary with the graduate students/recent graduates who was continually sarcastic and called out people at the start of the session for speaking during the land acknowledgement. I agree with the sentiment, but the tone of everything that person said made it difficult to receive.
- The drumming was beautiful, but often made it difficult to talk to those around me.
- Difficult to attend on the Saturday during a long weekend, as trip planned.

3. Which table talk session did you attend?

- Education - 3
- Health policy- 4
- Gender violence- 3
- Mental Health w Robert Wright- 4
- Health Services- 1
- Mental Health - Lana McLean -2

4. What was a takeaway from the table talk you attended?

- Informed about some of the gaps that exist for Black children/mothers and families, within mental health services and the impact that has.
- New initiatives and policy implementation.
- How interconnected major system elements are; urban planning, health, land ownership, etc.
- Race-based data is necessary for further access and analysis of findings.

5. Any additional feedback?

- Also loved the local Black artists/vendors; some stunning talent and loved the opportunity to take a piece away. Wearing it will make me continually mindful of my role in collaborating for change.

The post feedback form included the following questions with 54 responses:

1. Which demographic best describes how you are attending the conference?
 - Student, Social Worker, Research Scientist, Community, Health Care Professional, Government Representative, Physician, Teacher, Nursing Student, Sponsor
2. What did you learn from the conference about health outcomes in diverse Black communities in Canada and globally?
 - How racial bias exists in this era.
 - The history of systemic racism in the context of schizophrenia diagnoses in Black men was very enlightening.
 - All the talks were incredible.
 - Black communities throughout Canada and the world experience poorer health outcomes compared to others.
 - That our experience in NS is shared globally and we would benefit largely from more race-based data specifically for us, here in ANS. Proof, that diseases we have now are because of the legacy of harm done to our people over decades and centuries.
 - Racism is a structural and social determinant of health.
 - ALOT of context about outside out NS. A lot about mental health in the Black community.
3. What was your favourite part of the conference?

- The networking and learning about the history of African Nova Scotians and history of systemic racism in healthcare.
 - Networking and learning. The breakout groups were excellent and keynote speakers and panels were also excellent.
 - Connecting with other black health care professionals. This is valuable when it often feels like you are the only one.
 - Strong and relevant presenters and panelists all around.
- Hard to narrow down! Great sessions, great energy all around. The first thing I noticed as I showed up was the warmth and positivity. I am so glad I attended.
4. What was your least favourite part of the conference?
- I would have really appreciated if the program had full first name, last name, and affiliation for each of the presenters and small group session facilitators so that it would make it easier for me to find and reach out to them later. It would also have been great if the link to the program was included in each of the daily Eventbrite emails that were sent out during the conference.
 - Nothing - at minimal, the last-minute changes in programming - although I appreciated the communication when that did happen.
 - It was all amazing for an inaugural conference!!
- I thoroughly enjoyed this conference, and I appreciate the amount of time and resources required to plan a conference of this extent. For future conferences I would suggest improving on time management by having speakers stick to their time, and more time in between speakers for individuals to either have a break and/or network. Also, for those of us who are local and did not stay at the hotel as a guest, it would be good to have sessions more

appropriately spaced. As I spoke with a few individuals, we found it difficult to manage our time as the last session ended late in the day, and we had to go home to get changed to come back to the dinner. For a first conference to this magnitude, I think it ran pretty smoothly from an attendee's perspective. I cannot wait to return to the next one.

- Not being able to attend various table discussions.
- I appreciate everyone's efforts; my only request would be to allow more time for some things, so we could keep on schedule better.

5. What skills did you take away from the conference?

- Be aware and be more aware of my information.
- More about how to apply critical race theory to the health sector (I am a law student, so I was wired for that).
- We work extremely well globally and collectively.
- Advocating for yourself and others.
- I learned a great deal about the unique levels of Black Health that are being exposed through research and the complex things we need to uncover and be aware of meaningful listening.

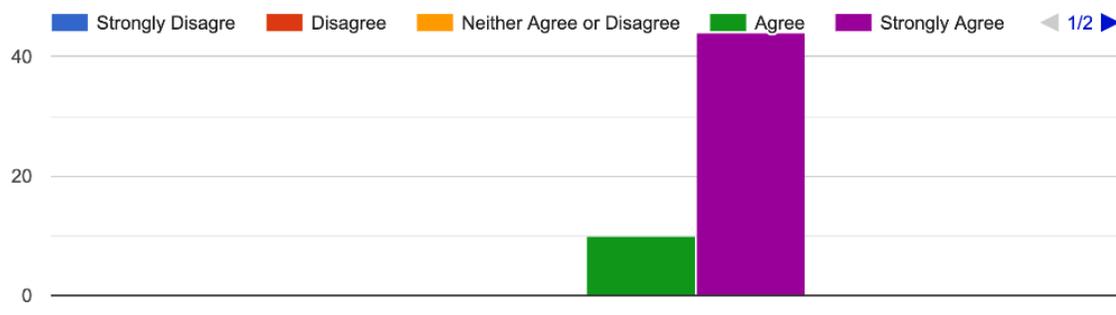
6. Any additional feedback?

- It was amazing. Well done to the organizers - hope to participate again in the future.
- This was an excellent way to spend the weekend, Thanks for a rejuvenating time.
- Next time for one topic we should talk about how many black businesses are helping to building hospitals and are part of the Physical site visits across the province. We need to also be a part of structural changes to health facilities so that people do not feel like they are being left out. This is something to think about.

- This conference was invaluable and would benefit from a larger audience - I hope that you have this again in the not-too-distant future.
- I think the keynote speeches were great, but I think it starts to feel long when its back-to-back. May it break it up by having more group sessions. Or divide people into groups and have different speakers rotate between the groups.
- Would have been beneficial to get detailed description of the individual sessions and other items on the agenda well in advance of the conference.
- I would recommend allowing more time for dedicated breaks throughout to allow for networking.
- Excellent conference. I congratulate the planning committee and volunteers for their hard work in putting on this first top notch gathering with relevant and meaningful topics. for black people. Well done! our ancestors are chanting praises.
- This conference was absolutely amazing, and I would not change a thing about the experience, other than to request that the event agenda would have times for when the various events are supposed to end. The conference exceeded my expectations for the first of its kind. I knew it would be amazing, but I was truly blown away at what you were able to organize. THANK YOU!
- Here are some suggestions for the next one:
- Hold the next conference in another part of the world, to reduce the workload for the current organizers.

- It would be great to put a call out for a planning committee to form, comprised of individuals from various areas of the world. I think it is more ideal for the workload to be shared, than to put all the pressure on one group.
 - Offer some more time between presentations where possible for people to take breaks - I think this may reduce the amount of people who are stepping out of the conference.
 - Create some opportunity to talk about intersections of Black health - queer/trans identities, gender, colourism, etc.
 - I think this was an amazing, very strong foundation, and we can now build on it and complicate our understanding of Black experiences in healthcare.
 - Again, THANK YOU. This was a phenomenal experience, and I am honoured to be part of the first IBHC. I hope all the organizers are taking much needed time for self-care :)
 - As a black healthcare provider, it was incredibly validating to hear that others face similar challenges.
7. Do you think this conference will provide valuable information you will want to share with others in your organizations/community? (See Below Table – Based on 54 responses)

Do you think this conference will provided valuable information you will want to share with others in your organization/community?



Knowledge Mobilization

This first International Black Health Conference received significant media attention, Dr. Ingrid Waldron was interviewed by [CBC](#) in June 2022. Dr. Barbara Hamilton-Hinch and Sharon Davis-Murdoch C.M. were interviewed by [Global news TV](#) in October 2022. Besides the organizing partners, the conference was promoted by many stakeholders like Medical Associations (Doctors of Nova Scotia), the Network for Advancement of Black Communities, reflecting a general interest and need for this conference.

The knowledge mobilization activities the team were involved in after the conference include: the development of this conference report to be posted on the Healthy Populations Institute website, social media, and disseminated among networks including partners and other stakeholders; meetings with the partners and members of Black Nova Scotian communities to start work on identified best practice approaches; and a special issue on the health outcomes of People of African descent in the Healthy Populations Institute peer-reviewed journal (<https://www.healthypopulationsinstitute.ca/hpj-special-issue-black-health>). Our engagement in other knowledge mobilization activities will be determined by our future collaborations with our

partners and, therefore, cannot be identified at this stage. See more details on the Next Steps section.

Best Practice Approaches for Addressing Health Disparities in Black Communities

Academic-based Table Talks

1. Health Policy

Led by Rhonda Atwell this conversation was about health policy designed to foster racial equity. The top three priority issues identified in relation to health policy were: lack of employment equity, lack of access to health education and lack of access to health services.

Community members identified the following as ways to address these issues:

- Black people need to be at the ‘table’ where health policy decisions are made, especially relating to the health of community members. ‘Employment equity is comprehensive to the health strategy.’
- Allies need to speak up and give power to marginalized groups
- Policy makers need to do more research and community town halls to determine the needs of the Black community

2. Health Services

Led by Camilla Watkins this conversation was about the impact of racism, and other social determinants of health, in accessing health care services for individuals from Black communities.

The following were identified as ways to address disparities in health services:

- Health service providers need cultural awareness and anti-bias training
- Continual funding is needed to promote health services in the Black community
- Health services need to be promoted enough to raise awareness in the community
- Community-based services do not provide enough support; community members

need access to mainstream services and programs

- More Black health service providers, safe workplace environments and health care services are needed
- Mentorship programs need to be developed to coach future health professionals
- There needs to be accountability for anti-Black Racism in the health care system by implementing processes to resolve this issue

3. Health Education

Led by Dr. Ifeyinwa Mbakgou, this conversation was about the integration of Black Health Education within the curricula for health professionals and linking health education discussions to the health disparities experienced by African Canadians. The following were identified as ways to address disparities in health education:

- Community members should be engaged to make health and health education accessible to the community
- Why the focus should be on the Black community, diversity within the Black community must be recognized
- The western framework of education should be reviewed with a lens of equity
- Cultural insensitivity in the health education system should be addressed and resolved

4. Mental Health

Lana MacLean and Robert Wright led separate tables on this topic. This conversation was about mental illness in Black communities, culturally determined beliefs about mental illness within Black communities and the effects on help-seeking and coping mechanisms as well as a general mistrust towards the health care system.

The following were identified as top priority issues related to mental health policy, mental health services, mental health research and/or mental health education for diverse Black communities:

- Maternal and child mental health,
- Need for family centered care
- Representation of (and support for) Black mental health specialists, and mental health education

The main gaps in addressing these issues for diverse Black communities were identified as:

- Lack of research and resources for Black mental health,
- the death of Black mental health professionals, and
- Lack of funding dedicated to Black mental health and the Black community

Community members suggest that these gaps can be addressed by:

- Developing solutions for long waiting periods to see specialists
- Developing a new understanding of wellness in Black communities
- Allocating dedicated funding generated through community for community if government resources continue to be limited
- Advocating for more mental health professionals and against the barriers set in place that create limitations for Black people in health education
- More health facilities and paths to healthcare professions

5. Health Research

Led by Dr. OmiSoore Dryden and Dr. Barb Hamilton-Hinch this conversation was about the need for a Tri-Council Research Stream for Black Health Research, equitable access to research funding and full participation in the merit review process to reduce barriers and improve

experiences of Black researchers. This table talk discussed the barriers and experiences of Black researchers. These included:

Issues

- Black scholars are less likely to receive funding than others
- Funding applications do not include issues that many Black researchers are interested in (i.e., Black populations, Black Queer issues, etc.)
- Black-led research teams experience more challenges receiving funding
- Grant review comments can be very racist and traumatic
- Anti-Black racism was only mentioned once at the conference. It needs to be mentioned to highlight the unique health experiences of Black people
- Research is often fact checked by non-Black people who get to make decisions about the significance of research centered around Black people
- The Black community needs to work at its own pace and not the pace of the 2-year deadline
- Black researchers, Black reviewers, and Black students must have a seat at the table since Black people rarely have a seat at the table when decisions are being made about grant applications
- Individuals who hold positions of power at the Tri-Council hold funding over people's heads and ask for free labour

Discussions

- Black community members are often invited to sit on panels to share their thoughts about issues of concern to the Black community but are often not paid for their participation
- CIHR reviewers need to be held accountable for their racist reviews

- Community groups (i.e., seniors) need help with the language of funding since it is difficult to navigate
- There is a need to increase the number of Black researchers in Nova Scotia since there are so few

Recommendations

- The Tri-Council needs to have specifically named Black funding streams that are Black-focused so that Black researchers do not have to fight over crumbs
- Black-led research that is focused on Black populations should only be assigned to Black reviewers
- Academic institutions should be taking the lead in ensuring that Black students have funding
- Agencies like Public Health Alliance of Canada (PHAC) do not have funding streams for Black research
- Intersectionality training

6. Gender Violence

Led by Dr. Adowa Onuora, this conversation was about mitigating Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Gender Expression (SOGIE) Based Violence experienced by Queer Black Youth in Canada. The best practice approaches determined during this session were the following:

- Due to gender-based violence, there is limited access to healthcare to members of the Black community. Increased awareness and support from the community and government are needed

- To reduce the impact of gender-based violence, it is important to use the correct pronouns to identify people. If you are unsure, ask and do not make assumptions
- Provision of government-funded locations that serve as safe places for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is needed, with an increased focus on Black youth

For healthcare workers:

- Make the topic of ‘gender’ reciprocal and create patient-centred environments
- Provide family-centred support for Black families

The following resources were identified to support violence mitigation:

- [AVALON](#)
- [Coverdale](#)
- [MacPhee center](#)
- [Parentingforliberation.org](#) - book & podcast
- [Victim Services](#)

Community-based Table Talks

1. Justice

Led by Robert Wright, this table talk discussion focused on one main topic “The need for transformational change (systemic across sectors) in the justice system.” Issues discussed include the following:

- Lack of support when Black people enter the justice system and when they are out of the system
- Lack of resources/programs in the Black community to support those who have left the justice system

- Lack of specific training on Black trauma-informed care and cultural competence, debriefing processes, protocols, as well as on how to treat African Nova Scotians who have been in the justice system or who are currently in it
- Lack of access to resources (especially due to COVID-19's role in the interruption of programs)
- Lack of human dignity experienced by incarcerated people
- Militarization of policing, including their lack of training in mental health/trauma-informed care/cultural competency)
- Lack of representation of Black people in positions at all levels of the justice system
- The partnership between health and justice must be deepened to provide culturally competent care
- Loss of citizenship and human dignity when incarcerated must be addressed
- Police should not be responding to mental health crises
- The police should be demilitarized
- Crown prosecutors need to approach Black people who are accused differently
- More training needs to be provided to professionals (police officers, health care workers, etc.) on trauma-informed care and cultural competency

2. Housing/Land Titles

Led by Curtis Whiley who works with the Land Titles Initiative, this discussion focused on different topics, including housing and security, educating the ANS community, and furthering the work being done by the Land Titles Initiative. Some key points and take aways included the following::

- Developers and other racial groups acquiring land in Black communities and around Black communities have contributed to the shrinking of Black communities
- Mediation services need to be in place for larger and or more challenging land title related issues (i.e., emotional resources)
- Access to education about estate planning is essential since it affects community members dying without wills
- Given the divide in Black communities over land titles, educating communities about how to come together to keep the land within Black communities is important
- Black communities must also be provided with education on the value of the land
- Government must be transparent when selling to developers

3. Education

This discussion was led by Karen Hudson and Sylvia Parris–Drummond. Presenters initiated the conversation by sharing their experiences and opening some topics for discussion, including the following:

- Racial bias leads teachers to exclude Black students
- There are barriers for those who are the first person in the family to go on to post-secondary education
- The public school system fails to embed African Nova Scotian traditions and experiences in schools
- The Nova Scotia Government is in the process of developing a framework for prior learning – how we learn and tell stories is different from others (oral traditions, hands on)
- Parents need to support the educators
- Africentric Learning Institute YouTube Channel is teaching parents how to advocate

for their children

- White teachers and parents need to be provided with anti-racism training to help them shift their language
- A space needs to be created where Black resources can be accessed in one place, such as a Black 411 or Black Google
- The school curriculum should be changed and updated
- Race-based data should be collected by the school system

4. Immigration

Led by Daisy During and Sabur Shogbamu this table talk was a space to discuss health issues specific to African immigrants.

Issues and solutions presented:

- Immigrants are led to believe that they will have access to the best health care system, but when they arrive, they realize that there are certain resources they do not have access to
- Immigrants with medical backgrounds and training are not being accredited and are being forced to move to other provinces, such as Alberta or British Columbia
- Many immigrants do not know how to navigate the health care system
- The Immigrant Settlement Agency of Nova Scotia (ISANS) is a good resource for immigrants
- People who are settled in the position to make change need to work together to coordinate efforts

5. Employment

Led by Jeviere Gordon, the discussion around employment focused on the fact that employment is tied to your income and your income affects your way of life. The toxic treatment of Black people negatively impacts their mental health, self-esteem, and confidence.

Recommendations:

- Human resource policies need to be reviewed
- People of colour need to be hired into HR positions at all levels
- Black people need to see themselves represented at higher levels in all types of jobs
- More community development centres need to be opened in Black communities and run by people of colour
- More equitable hiring practices are needed.
- There needs to be diversity audits and transparency report
- There needs to be greater representation of Black people in the health care system

6. Child Welfare

Led by Emma Beukema, in collaboration with Mekisha Johnstons, Daniele Jackson, Anne Simmonds and Barbara Estwick. This table talk discussed questions that were presented to the group. The focus was on the child welfare system and if it is broken. Key points from that question were:

- Representation, proper training, and support is needed for children of African Descent
- There needs to be proper allocation of resources
- Therapy and healing (i.e., Clinical Therapists) services should be available in Black communities
- There needs to be a true understanding of Afrocentricity

- There needs to be more representation of Black people in decision making roles.

7. Environment

Led by Vanessa Hartley and Louise Delisle. This discussion largely focused on the community of Shelburne and the environmental issues surrounding this community.

Discussion points were:

- There needs to be a plan to protect the community when the dump is decommissioned
- Several advocates are needed to support the community and to encourage community members to come together as a group to fight environmental injustices
- More representation is needed at the table
- A Human Rights complaint was filed to address environmental racism
- Council members have not been transparent and have been involved in some “not so above water behaviour.”
- Bill 57 was adopted to address climate change, but the recommendations are not tangible as they do not explicitly mention environmental racism in the African Nova Scotian and Indigenous Community

8. Spirituality

This session was led by Reverend Debbie and the best practice approaches determined during this session were the following:

- Spirituality was described as what individuals believe to give them power and strength, while religion is political
- As Black people, we continue to keep the faith practices that got our ancestors through slavery, such as love for our own, faith in the word of God, God, family, hope, dreams, and a free mentality

- Coping mechanisms include music, singing and dancing, telling stories, praying, community, worship, faith, family, and fellowship
- Spirituality celebrates the essence of a person's values and beliefs

9. Youth

Led by Lindell Smith, Ty Martin, Jones, Kaisen MacKinnon and Shirley Hodder.

Issues:

- Mental Health- not often privatized and not talked about enough or normalized
- Lack of Doctors- affecting the frequency at which Black people access these services
- Education- education youth on mental health and how to access resources, educating the older generation to lessen the divide and bring an end to those isolating from suffering with mental health in silence
- Employment- bettering jobs in Halifax
- Generational Trauma- acknowledging that this exists and having conversations around it

Discussions:

- Youth are using friends as healthcare services
- Health issues are not talked about at home or in social gatherings
- Need to check in each other and be intentional when talking to men
- We need education and awareness plays a big part in being more open with discussions
- There are different barriers to discussion mental health based on background (i.e., Male, female, heritage)
- Collecting race-based data- it is being collected but not explained what for or how it will be used

- Being a Black researcher does not automatically create trust in a Black community to collect race-based data
- Transparency needed when collecting race-based data

The best practice approaches determined during this session were the following:

- Black youth need resources to help cope with mental health issue
- Youth need resources that help them cope and support their mental health needs
- Youth need to be included in decision making processes and have their voices heard

Next Steps

Following the conference, there have been strengthened partnerships and continuing conversations on identifying and addressing the gaps that individuals in the Black community/diaspora face with regards to multiple determinants of health. Some of the outcomes of the this strengthened partnerships include the following:

- Nova Scotia Health has received a copy of this report and is interested in holding conversations with ANSPAD and other members of the Black community who are working in the health field.
- The conference organizing committee met with Karen Mutyabule, African Nova Scotian Health Equity Advisor with the Department of Health and Wellness from the Government of Nova Scotia after the conference to provide their feedback on a Health Equity Framework that is being developed as a direct response to Nova Scotia Legislature - Bill 96 - Dismantling Racism and Hate Act (nslegislature.ca).
- The Healthy Populations Flagship team members are preparing a call for a special issue on Black Health in the Healthy Populations Journal to commemorate the International Black Health Conference Anniversary. This journal is a student-led, open-access, peer-

reviewed journal housed at the Healthy Populations Institute (HPI), Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS. For this special issue, a guest Editorial Board composed of Black students will be formed and mentored by the permanent Editorial Board to provide a valuable training experience. The upcoming call for papers will be disseminated among the conference attendees and will allow submissions in a variety of formats, including storytelling and other art forms besides the traditional academic article.

Conversations around the disparities faced by the Black community have started and will continue. Using this report, these conversations can use the issues, and recommendations put forth by health care professionals, as well as community members. These conversations can begin to foster positive and new relationships and create plans to implement new best practices. For example, Black nurses who attended the conference had an inaugural general meeting of the Black Nurses Association of Nova Scotia (BNANS). This association was formed in December 2019, but plans to have a general meeting was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic. BNANS serves as the provincial voice for Black nurses (registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), nurse practitioners) and nursing students in all domains of practice. BNANS is an organizational member of the Pan-Canadian Association of Nurses of African Descent, a leading national organization committed to mobilizing, supporting, and connecting nurses of African descent across the country through their respective provincial/jurisdictional organizations.

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Appendices

Appendix I. The biographies and pictures from Keynote speakers, Table-talk Discussants and Presenters are shown in this section. We have made our best to include everyone, however, we could not obtain the biographies and pictures for the following participants: Stephanie Bizzeth, Dr. Michelle Williams, and Korede Akindoju (Presenters). Anne Simmonds, Barbara Eastwick, Lindell Smith, Ty Martin, Kaisen MacKinnon, Shirley Hodder, and Jones Awes (Table-talk discussants).

Keynote Speakers

International Black Health Conference

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS
OCTOBER 6TH - OCTOBER 8TH 2022

DR. NOTISHA MASSAQUOI
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR | DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIETY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, SCARBOROUGH.

DR. JOHNATHAN METZLER
FREDERICK B. RENTSCHLER II PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY, DIRECTOR | CENTER FOR MEDICINE, HEALTH, AND SOCIETY, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE.

DR. GWENETTA D. CURRY
LECTURER OF RACE, ETHNICITY, AND HEALTH | USHER INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

Dr. Notisha Massaquoi

Dr. Massaquoi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health and Society at the University of Toronto, Scarborough, with a graduate appointment in the Factor Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. She is also the founder of the newly created Black Health Equity Lab (The BHEL). She holds a BA in Psychology from Western University, an MSW, and a PhD in Social Justice Education from the University of Toronto. Her early career established several health service organizations which served Black communities in Canada, including Africans in Partnership Against AIDS, and Taibu Community Health Centre. She designed the health and research programs and served for two decades as the Executive Director of *Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre* in Toronto – the only Community Health Centre in North America which provides specialized primary healthcare for Black and racialized women.

She has consulted globally with the United Nations Social Development Forum on racism and its impact on workforces and with UNAIDS on organizational responses to HIV and migration. She is considered one of Canada's leading experts in developing equity responsive organizations and her research and advocacy have pushed many Canadian health institutions to address anti-Black racism and the collection of race-based data. She has served on the City of Toronto race-based data collection working group, The Ontario Anti- Racism Directorate race-based data standards working group and most notably, she co-chaired the Toronto based Anti-Racism Advisory Panel responsible for producing the first race-based data collection policy in Canada which mandates a police service to collect race-based data for every public interaction. Notisha has served as a Board trustee for numerous health organizations, including the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, The Stephan Lewis Foundation, and the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research.

Dr. Jonathan Metzel

Dr. Metzel is the Frederick B. Rentschler II Professor of Sociology and Psychiatry, and the Director of the Center for Medicine, Health, and Society, at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. He is also the Research Director of The Safe Tennessee Project, a non-partisan, volunteer-based organization that is concerned with gun-related injuries and fatalities in America and in Tennessee. He received his MD from the University of Missouri, MA in humanities/poetics and Psychiatric internship/residency from Stanford University, and PhD in American Culture from University of Michigan. Dr. Metzl's knowledge and expertise on gun violence, as a professor, and a psychiatrist offers a unique perspective of gun violence and the stereotypical discussion about to race and mental illness and violent crimes in the US context and whether mental illness is the root cause of gun violence. He has discussed his work through various mediums including presentations, publications, and traditional media.

A 2008 Guggenheim fellow, Professor Metzl has written extensively for medical, psychiatric, and popular publications. His books include *The Protest Psychosis*, *Prozac on the Couch*, and *Against Health: How Health Became the New Morality*. Much of his research has been focused on Psychiatry, Race and Health, History of Mental Health, Gender and Politics. The academic-based table talks also took place on this day, covering topics on health policy, health services, health research, health education, mental health, and tri-council research. The content of these table talks will be discussed in this report.

Dr. Gwenetta Curry

Dr. Curry is a Lecturer of Race, Ethnicity, and Health in the Usher Institute at the University of Edinburgh. Her research interests are Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, Maternal Health, and Black Family Studies. Her present research analyzes racial disparities in treatment and infection rates of Covid-19. She is the co-author of the UNCOVER Covid-19 Evidence review “What is the Evidence on Ethnic Variation on Covid-19 Incidence and Outcomes,” and “Sharpening the global focus on ethnicity and race in the time of COVID-19” which has recently appeared in *The Lancet*.

She is a member of The Royal Society’s DELVE Initiative and a senior research associate in the Global Health Governance Programme at the University of Edinburgh Medical School. She is a member of the Medical School Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Alliance and the UK Inclusive Data Taskforce.

Event Planner: Keisha Pinto Events



Keisha Pinto is the Creative Event Organizer (CEO) & Lead Planner of Keisha Pinto Events Inc., an event planning firm located in Toronto, that also services clients on a global scale. Keisha is backed by 10+ years of experience in the events industry. She is seasoned in our craft with expertise in event planning, management, and strategies.

As an event planner Keisha's main objective is to understand her client's vision, needs and expectations, and then go beyond that. She prides herself on delivering the highest level of exceptional service when orchestrating the planning and logistical details for her clients, ensuring that their event is executed flawlessly without missing any of the fine details. Keisha has worked with some established companies and brands such as MLSE, Toronto Maple Leafs & Black Girl Hockey Club, curating impactful and unforgettable experiences for them.

In addition, Keisha is also a revenue generating event planner, she helps other event producers and business brands leverage their events, through strategic and intentional planning. In 2020 Keisha obtained her certification as Virtual Event Planner & Pandemic Compliance Advisor (PCA) with the meeting & events industry, which had now become essential in the events industry.

Table Talk Discussants

Rhonda Atwell



Rhonda Atwell has several years of experience working, volunteering, and learning with non for profit, government, and communities within the Halifax Regional Municipality and in the Greater Toronto area. Rhonda has an educational background in Health Science and Health Promotion and brings with her extensive skill sets and vast experience. She is a trained facilitator in ASPIRE and Dialogue for Peaceful change and has a strong interest in Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI), health promotion, transformational psychology, and holistic wellness.

Currently, Rhonda works as the African Nova Scotian Services Consultant at Nova Scotia Health (NSH) and brings a lot to her role, as she is passionate about addressing health inequities for diverse communities and acting on issues of real and lasting systematic level change.

Rhonda was also recently awarded the 2020 Public Health Championship Award & the Nova Scotia Health - Making Waves Award in 2022, recognizing her advocacy and leadership efforts, specific to equity, diversity, and anti-racism hiring practices and patient care delivery through Nova Scotia Health and the broader African Nova Scotian communities.

Camilla Watkins



Camilla is an experienced leader in healthcare management and quality improvement consulting with over 30 years in multiple healthcare settings, spanning four provinces in both the public and private sectors. She holds a Bachelor of Nursing from Dalhousie University, Master of Business Administration from City University with a specialization in Quality Management, and a Certificate in Lean Six Sigma Black Belt for Healthcare.

She held leadership positions in acute care hospitals, community home care, and long-term care. Her leadership career began in Nova Scotia as a Clinical Leader in acute care hospitals before moving to Alberta and providing leadership for the community home care program with the Health Authority. In addition, she was employed by a community college to provide online education and coordinate clinical placements for the Nursing Refresher program across nine campuses in NE Alberta and NW Saskatchewan.

While in British Columbia, she held leadership roles in long-term care as an Administrator and Director of Care for residential care facilities. She was employed with the Fraser Health Authority (FHA) for many years as a Manager of Consultants, providing consulting services for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety for 22 clinical programs across the Health Authority.

After many years of providing leadership and education on the accreditation process across the FHA for residential care facilities, she started her own Healthcare Leadership Consulting Business and successfully supported residential long-term care facilities with the implementation of the accreditation process.

Camilla's passion for improving the quality of care and service in the healthcare system led to her pursuit of specialized knowledge in Quality Management. Her commitment to incorporating best practice standards, stakeholder engagement strategies, the voice of the customer, and data analysis are the pillars of her success in implementing system change and performance improvement in organizations.

She is currently employed with the Nova Scotia Health Authority as Health Services Manager, Primary Health Care, supporting Dalhousie Family Medicine Clinics and Collaborative Family Practices in the Halifax Network.

Dr. Ifeyinwa Mbakogu



Dr. Ifeyinwa Associate Professor at the School of Social Work, Dalhousie University, where she is Chair of the Diversity and Equity Committee (DEC) and cross-appointed with International Development Studies (IDS). She is also a member of the Healthy Populations Institute and its Flagship Project to Improve the Health Outcomes of People of African Descent. Mbakogu's diverse research interests include human trafficking, forced

migration and displacement, conflicts, and insurgencies, reintegration/resettlement, violence and trauma, African Diaspora studies, race, racism, age, and health, explored within anti-racist and anti-colonial lenses.

Dr Adowa Onuora



Dr. Adwoa Onuora, recognized as a leading scholar-activist within the women's movement in Jamaica, was appointed the next Nancy's Chair in Women's Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University in July 2022. The Nancy's Chair was established in the mid-1980s by feminist and philanthropist Nancy Ruth to raise awareness of women's issues. Before joining Mount Saint Vincent University, Dr. Onuora was Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in the Institute for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus. She has worked in formal and informal educational settings and has established expertise in community situated-learning, equity, and social change. She has taught and published on critical pedagogy and educational transformation, de-colonizing practices and indigenous epistemologies, the intersection and impact of gender, sexuality/sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, abilities, and culture on women's lived experiences. Her areas of interest and specialization also include women, gender, and transformative education; critical, feminist, and maternal pedagogies; social reproduction and the care economy; and sexualities and gender-based violence. She has been heavily involved in community-based groups

calling for the decriminalization of abortion in Jamaica and has been active in social justice advocacy around legal reform to Jamaica's Sexual Offences Act, and related Acts that criminalize marginalized groups.

Robert Wright



Robert Seymour Wright is a Social Worker and Sociologist whose 31-year career has spanned the fields of education, child welfare, forensic mental health, trauma, sexual violence, and cultural competence. A “clinician/academic/administrator,” he has always integrated his work delivering direct practice clinical service to clients with teaching and supervising interns and promoting lasting systemic change through social policy advocacy. He also consults, trains, speaks, and comments on a wide range of issues. Robert is a trained mediator and facilitator who has worked with families, communities, non-profits, and large corporations to address conflicts and establish related policies. His extensive pro bono work gave birth to The Peoples' Counselling Clinic, a non-profit mental health clinic. His pioneering work with colleagues in cultural competence and conducting cultural assessments has received national attention and has resulted in his recent role as Executive Director of the African Nova Scotian Justice Institute.

Lana MacLean



Lana is a registered practicing clinical social worker with over 30 years of experience. Working in the fields of addiction, mental health, and trauma settings. She enjoys working with various patient populations but has spent most of her career working in the ABC (African, Black and Caribbean) and New Canadian communities. Lana holds a BA in Community Studies from UCCB and a Bachelor and Master's in Social Work from Dalhousie University. Lana has a small private practice in Halifax where she provides individual and family counselling.

Lana has presented at local, national, and international conferences on the area of cultural competency in mental health, addictions, and forensics social work. She has also presented on issues of race and trauma informed care in health care and in clinical practice. For the past four years Lana has work to provide culturally responsive support, coaching and mentoring in corporate Canada. Lana has been a lead consultant with major health care organization developing and creating clinical cultural competency with leadership and with staff. Lana has been instrumental in the creating culturally responsive mental health care programs and treatment programs for child and adolescence mental health delivery.

Recognized by the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers as, "one of the most important leaders in Nova Scotia, and increasingly across Canada, in developing models for the provision of social and culturally competent assessments of African Nova Scotian clients involved in the criminal

justice system in particular and as well in the family court system.” Lana has been qualified as expert witness in family and criminal courts on issues of race and culture and is one of the leading authors in the development *Impact of Race and Culture Assessments*.

Presently, Lana is consultant with Mi’kmaq Right Initiative providing consultation on emerging best practices in the area of culturally responsive assessments for First Nations Families. She is an active member of the African Nova Scotian access to Justice Judicial Committee, and she is the past chair of the African United Baptist Association Social Justice Committee. Lana is a sought-after guest lecturer at Dalhousie School of Social Work and School of medicine and is an adjunct professor with Rensselaer School of Social Worker, University of Waterloo.

Dr. OmiSoore Dryden



Dr. OmiSoore H. Dryden (she/her/hers), a Black queer femme and associate professor, is the James R Johnston Endowed Chair in Black Canadian Studies, Faculty of Medicine, Interim Director of the newly established Black Studies in STEM Research Institute at Dalhousie University, co-lead of the “Improving the health outcomes of people of African descent” flagship project at the Healthy Populations Institute at Dalhousie University, as well as co-lead of the new national organization – The Black Health Education Collaborative. Dr. Dryden engages in interdisciplinary scholarship and research that focuses on Black LGBTQI communities, blood donation systems in Canada, anti-Black racism in

health care, medical education, and Black health curricular content development. OmiSoore has published in peer-reviewed journals and book collections and has an edited collection (with Dr. Suzanne Lenon): *Disrupting Queer Inclusion: Canadian Homonationalisms and the Politics of Belonging* (UBC Press, 2015); and the co-authored Commentary (with Dr. Onye Nnorom), "Time to Dismantle Systemic anti-Black Racism in Medicine in Canada" (2021) in the *CMAJ* (Canadian Medical Association Journal), and the article titled, "Who Gets To Do Medicine: Black Canadian Studies and Medical Education in the 'Special Forum on Black Studies in Canada'" in the academic journal, *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* (2022).

Dr. Barb Hamilton-Hinch



Dr. Barb Hamilton-Hinch is from the historic African Nova Scotian communities of Beechville and Cherrybrook. She is the mother of three amazing boys. Barb is currently employed at Dalhousie University as the Assistant Vice Provost of Equity and Inclusion and an Associate Professor with the School of Health and Human Performance at Dalhousie University. Her work examines the impact of structural, systemic, and institutional racism on diverse populations, particularly people of African descent. Barb is also the co-lead of Improving the Health Outcomes for People of African Descent, a flagship of the Healthy Population Institute at Dalhousie University. Some of Barb's current research projects include Closing the Opportunity Gap for African Nova Scotian Learners;

Optimizing Services for Families Living in Communities that have been Marginalized; Examining the Impact of Racism on the Health and Wellbeing of People of African Descent; and the benefits and challenges of Culturally Relevant Programs for Post-Secondary Students. She is said to be the first African Nova Scotian to graduate from Dalhousie University with a PhD in any discipline.

Curtis Whiley



Curtis Whiley is a sixth generation African Nova Scotian from the historical community of Upper Hammonds Plains. Curtis' family has a history of operating sawmills and cooper shops in the community for over 200 years. Curtis has worked with the Province of Nova Scotia in various roles with Housing Nova Scotia and the Land Titles Initiative. In 2020, Curtis relocated to Arviat, Nunavut working with the Nunavut Housing Corporation to expand homeownership programs in Canada's North. Beginning in 2022, Curtis returned home to Nova Scotia to lead delivery of the Land Titles Initiative as the Initiative's Manager. Curtis is currently pursuing a Master of Business Administration with a specialization in Social Enterprise Leadership from the University of Fredericton, and he holds a Bachelor of Commerce with a focus on Entrepreneurship from Saint Mary's University. As a volunteer, Curtis has been advocating for community-led development which led to his founding of the Upper Hammonds Plains Community Land Trust. UHPCLT will create permanent affordable housing while providing land protection for his

community. Through this work, Curtis is engaging, educating, and empowering community and partners to recognize the benefits of a community land trusts as mechanisms to facilitate community transformation.

Sylvia Parris-Drummond



Sylvia is President of SVPARRIS CONSULTING and CEO of the Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute. Her work in education, strategic facilitation and the community is rooted in core Africentric Principles. She is a seasoned collaborator and social justice change agent. Sylvia conducts policy analysis and develops education products focused on anti-racism and social equity transformation. She was the lead consultant for a provincial government sponsored project to develop proposed operational models for the Health Association of African Canadians. The report was titled, *Evolving to Sustainability through Capacity Building and Financial Diversification* (2013). As an entrepreneur and recipient of the 2022 Top 50 CEOs Atlantic Business Magazine, 2020 RBC Social Change Award, she has influenced change in the corporate and private sectors. She received an Honorary Diploma from Nova Scotia Community College and holds master’s degrees in Curriculum and Lifelong Learning – Africentricity. Sylvia has been actively involved across a broad range of community initiatives and organizations. She is proud founder of the African Canadian Women in the Public Service (ACWPS) and leads in many volunteer groups. Sylvia

is proud mother and Nanny. She says I strive to live a quote by Maya Angelou – “I would like to be known as an intelligent woman, a courageous woman, a loving woman, a woman who teaches by being.

Karen Hudson



Karen Hudson is an experienced and knowledgeable educator with over 27 years of educational training as an instructional leader, currently employed as Principal of Auburn Drive High with Halifax Regional Center for Education (HRCE). She is the creator of the first Africentric Cohort in Math and Literacy within the province of Nova Scotia. Recently, she just assisted in rolling out two other schools within HRCE to offer Africentric Cohorts within their schools. She is a founding member of Connecting to Africa, Africentric Learning Institute, and the Freedom School. She is a protégé of Cultural Awareness Youth Group of Nova Scotia (CAYG) and presently the acting President for the Black Educators Association (BEA). She holds several master’s degrees. In her Master of Environmental Studies, she wrote her thesis in “A Question of Environmental Racism in the Preston Area, Nova Scotia” in 2001. She was a monitor for the first democratic election in South Africa in 1994, the recipient of the Nova Scotia Teacher’s Award, the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Award and Provincial Family Volunteer Award. In 2019, she was recognized nationally as one of Canada’s Outstanding Principals for her work in embedding Africentric principles within the public school system by the Learning Partnership. Karen is dedicated to working with her

community, she loves working with children and is the mother of two boys.

Jeviere Gordon

Javiere Gordon – is currently a Career Development Practitioner at VANSDA having graduated with a Certification in Human Resources. With 5 years-plus experience in providing career counselling, job coaching, corporate staff development and training coordination, Javiere has a wealth of experience to draw upon when offering clients informed advice and guidance related to career exploration and trends, skill acquisition, job search, job matching and maintenance. Applying academic training and practical strategies, Javiere’s culturally diverse and inclusive service delivery supports clients in their employment journey from initial visit to accepting a job or skills training. With Javiere’s help clients to recognize their employment barriers, find solutions and build resiliency and mental wellness in the workplace.

Daisy During



Daisy Daphne During is a Registered Nurse who has practiced nursing in three different continents and currently works as a Family Practice Nurse at the Woodlawn Medical Clinic in Dartmouth. Daisy believes that good health education, and strong women empowerment especially for the visible minority are not only fundamental in supporting All women in succeeding and achieving optimal health but are also the building blocks of health equity in Nova Scotia and beyond. In addition to being a Family Practice Nurse, she is also actively involved in the community where she works directly with African women, helping new arrivals and youths in the

community, she is the Chair of the United African Canadian Women's Association.

Daphne is a proud recipient of the Florence Nightingale Award for her dedication and excellent teamwork and her caring nature towards all. She was also awarded the Midland North Volunteer Award for the great role she plays in the immigrant community. Daisy is married and is blessed with two beautiful children and one granddaughter.

Emma Beuekma



Emma is currently a Project Director at the Department of Community Service within the Policy and Innovation team. She brings a multidisciplinary approach to her work having worked in entrepreneurship and citizen-engagement for organizations such as the Black Business Initiative, MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning and Can-World Consulting Services. She has diverse work experience in project management, program design, business, and international trade.

Emma is passionate about leadership, entrepreneurship, supplier diversity, citizen-engagement community service and advocacy for causes she believes in such as women and girls' empowerment. She currently serves on the board of MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning and the Black Business Initiative.

A proud Canadian who immigrated to Canada with her family over 20 years ago. Emma is also proud to be a wife to Sean and mother to Kenia and Evelyn.

Mekisha Johnston



Mekisha was born, raised and still resides in Cherry Brook, the smallest community of the Preston Township. Mekisha holds a Bachelor of Arts degree, graduate diploma in Psycho-social rehabilitation, and is currently in her final year of Social Work degree, as a recipient of the Dalhousie and DCS cohort. Mekisha has held roles in Children, Youth and Family Supports (CYFS) division in service delivery from 2011-2021. Currently, holds a management position in CYFS as a Prevention and Early Intervention Specialist. Mekisha sits on many boards and associations within her community and neighbouring communities. However, her favourite job of all time is being a mother to her now adult son, Kayvont.

Mekisha's hope is to see an anti- oppressive child welfare system that serves the best interest of children, youth, families, and COMMUNITIES. Mekisha believes that the best interest of child(ren) is multi- layered. One cannot meet the best interest of child(ren) without doing collective work, building relationships, and looking back to move forward.

Vanessa Hartley



Vanessa Hartley is an 8th generation Black Loyalist descendant, born and raised in Shelburne, Nova Scotia. Vanessa is passionate in the advancement

of historic African Nova Scotian communities. Vanessa was awarded Provincial Volunteer of the Year representing the Municipality of Shelburne. Vanessa serves on the Black Loyalist Heritage Board of Directors and Executive Member for People of African Descent Coalition (DPAD).

Lousie Delisle



Louise Delisle is an award-winning activist, author, playwright, and African Nova Scotian community leader with over thirty years' experience in the health care field. The eldest of seven children, a mother and grandmother, Louise was born and has lived in Shelburne, Nova Scotia most of her life.

Louise's work addressing environmental racism and impacts of climate change on the Black community of Shelburne began in 2014 and she founded the South End Environmental Injustice Society (SEED) in 2016. SEED is a direct grassroots response to the siting of the landfill near the African Nova Scotian and working-poor community in Shelburne.

SEED was awarded the Group Award at the 2018 Nova Scotia Human Rights Awards Celebration for their work addressing environmental concerns in the African Nova Scotian community in the south end of Shelburne.

In 2019 and 2020 SEED made international news with the release of "There's Something in The Water" a documentary produced by Elliot

Page, Ian Daniel, and Dr. Ingrid Waldron, directed by Page and Daniel, and based on the book by Waldron entitled *There's Something in The Water: Environmental Racism in Indigenous & Black Communities* and published in 2018 by Fernwood Publishing.

In addition to Louise's work as a member of SEED she was a board member Rural Water Watch and has been a member of the Advisory Council for the Shelburne Regional High School.

She worked as Community Liaison Officer with The Black Loyalist Heritage Society; RCMP Black and Racially Visible Advisory Committee member.

The Environmental Noxiousness and Racial Inequalities Community Health (ENRICH) Project facilitator; Community Facilitator Black Women's Health project for McMaster University National Research Project and Dalhousie University, School of Nursing; and was a member of the Shelburne Community Health Board. Louise is also the co-chair of the African Nova Scotian community collision.

Rev. Debbie Simmonds



The Reverend Debbie (Ross) Simmonds hails from the community of East Preston. She has been married to her soul mate, Hank Simmonds for 37 years. Together they have three children and four grandchildren. Debbie has willingly and faithfully served East Preston United Baptist church and her community in a variety of positions. She was mentored by her former

Pastor The Reverend, Dr. LeQuita Hopgood Porter who now resides in Florida. In 2017, Debbie received a Canada 150th-year commemorated medal for community service from Senator Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard. In 2018 she graduated from Acadia Divinity college with a Certificate in Christian Studies. She returned to ADC to further her studies and in the spring of 2020 graduated with a Certificate in Ministerial Studies. In Oct. 2020, Min. Debbie was called by EPUBC to serve as Minister of Evangelism/Outreach and Multimedia. She was ordained on Nov. 7th, 2021, becoming a member of the Canadian Baptist of Atlantic Canada (CBAC). Reverend Debbie is currently the AUBA Evangelism chair and is also a board member of the Health Association of African Canadians (HAAC). Rev. Debbie loves the Lord and enjoys serving God and people. One of the Scriptures that resonates with her is found in Phil 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” God has proved this to her, time after time.

Presenters

Prof. Michelle Williams



Prof. Michelle Williams B.S.W. (Dal), LL.B. (Tor), LL.M. (NYU) teaches criminal law and African Nova Scotians and the law and has served as an academic researcher on restorative justice. She is a Dalhousie Provost Fellow leading the University’s African Nova Scotian Strategy, and the inaugural chair of Schulich’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. She served as Director of the award-winning Indigenous Blacks and

Mi'kmaq (IB&M) Initiative (2004-2020) and is a member of the African Nova Scotian Access to Justice Judicial Committee, the Canadian Centre for Legal Innovation in Sexual Assault Response (CCLISAR) Board, and the African Nova Scotian UN Decade for People of African Descent (ANSDPAD) Coalition Executive. In the latter capacity she works with the Coalition's Justice Strategy Working Group on a range of legal issues including eradicating street checks, the use of ANS Impact of Race and Cultural Assessments (IRCA), and the establishment of an African Nova Scotian Justice Institute.

Dr. Ron Milne



Dr. Ron Milne was born and raised in Halifax, Nova Scotia, with roots from Trinidad. He is a graduate of Dalhousie Medical School and completed his residency at Queen's University in Family Medicine. Dr. Milne has more than 40 years of experience working as both a Family Physician and a Hospitalist in both Ontario and Nova Scotia with a diverse background in providing care to communities. Dr. Milne has worked in various Indigenous communities in the James Bay Region, communities in the Jane and Finch area of Toronto, and has also participated in international Humanitarian health projects in Honduras, Costa Rica, and Belize. Dr. Milne is the Family Physician for the Nova Scotia Brotherhood, which focuses on providing primary care services to Men of African descent. Dr. Milne, understanding the importance and impact of the Social Determinants of Health, approaches his practice in a

community-oriented manner. Much of Dr. Milne' desire for community work is driven by the influence of his grandfather's career, Dr. Alfred Waddell. Dr. Waddell was among the first Black Physicians to graduate from Dalhousie Medical School and was a champion of Civil and Human Rights.

In Dr. Milne' spare time he enjoys recharging in nature, kayaking on the lakes, biking through the many trails around the province, or spending time at his cottage. He enjoys all types of food and music, especially Caribbean foods, and live jazz.

Dr. Jude Mary Cenat



Jude Mary Cénat, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the School of Psychology, Chair of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Black Health, and Director of the Vulnerability, Trauma, Resilience & Culture (V-TRaC) Research Laboratory at the University of Ottawa. His research program explores factors associated with vulnerability, trauma, and resilience, with a particular interest in the role of cultural factors. Dr. Cénat conducts research on racial disparities in mental health and social services, the impact of natural disasters and infectious diseases on mental health, interpersonal and non- interpersonal trauma, and global mental health. He conducts research in North America, Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean. Dr.Cénat leads a major project on the mental health of Black communities in Canada that has allowed for the development of online trainings (via the bilingual platform: <https://mentalhealthforeveryone.ca>) that aim to equip

mental health professionals with the knowledge needed to provide culturally appropriate and anti-racist care. Dr. Cénat is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists, and Scientists.

Terrence Lewis



Dr. Terrence Lewis is an Associate Professor and the Undergraduate Coordinator for the BSW Program at the Dalhousie University School of Social Work.

He has earned an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Sociology & Social Work from the Boston University School of Social Work. He has educational, research and clinical practice experience. Dr. Lewis is also an active member of the Healthy Populations Institute Flagship Project to Improve the Health Outcomes of People of African Descent. His research areas include multi-culturally responsive practice, Mental Health and Sexual Health in LGBTQ2S+ communities of color, and the roles of religion and spirituality in the holistic health of LGBTQ2S+ persons of color, their families, and their communities.

Tari Ajadi



Tari Ajadi is a PhD candidate in Political Science at Dalhousie University, an incoming Assistant Professor at McGill University, and an active member of the Healthy Population Institute's Improving the Health Outcomes of People of African Descent flagship at Dalhousie University.

He is a co-founder of the Nova Scotia Policing Policy Working Group, a member of the Board of Directors of the Health Association of African Canadians, and a Board Member of the East Coast Prison Justice Society. His research compares how Black activists in municipalities in Nova Scotia and Ontario strategize to prompt change in policing and in health policy.

Vincent Mousseau

Vincent Mousseau is a Vanier Scholar, registered social worker, educator, and community organizer based in Kjiipuktuk. They are a doctoral student at the Faculty of Health at Dalhousie University, where they study the barriers that Black men and masculine of centre non-binary people face in accessing health and social services in Canada. They also earned a Bachelor of Social Work from McGill University, and a Master of Science in Social Work from Université de Montréal.

Their current areas of academic interest surround intersectional models of identity development for Black 2SLGBTQ+ people, the creation of intergenerational and intersectional 2SLGBTQ+ spaces, and Afropessimist theory.

Chelsa States



Chelsa States (she/her) is a biracial (Black/White), African Nova Scotian registered nurse, researcher and activist. She is currently completing her Master of Science in Nursing at Dalhousie University. Her masters work examines grieving experiences of an African Nova Scotian using the Scholarly Personal Narrative methodology. Ms. States plans to continue this research with her future PhD work. Her additional scholarly work

examines health outcomes in the African Nova Scotian population. Ms. States is the inaugural President of the Black Nurses Association of Nova Scotia.

Keisha Jefferies



Keisha Jefferies is a Toronto-based African Nova Scotian woman, born and raised in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. She is a registered nurse and postdoctoral fellow in the Faculty of Education at York University. Her doctoral research, which was funded by Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Vanier-CGS), Killam Trust, Research Nova Scotia, Johnson Scholarship Foundation, BRIC NS and Dalhousie University, examined the leadership experiences of African Nova Scotian nurses and the implications for nursing practice and education. Her scholarly and advocacy work focuses on addressing anti-Black racism in nursing, inclusivity in post-secondary institutions, and health outcomes in Black communities.

Korede Esan



Korede Esan is a graduate student in her second year of Master of Applied Health Services Research at Saint Mary's University Halifax. In addition, Korede work as a Research Associate with Nova Scotia Health Research, Innovation, and Discovery, and the Food Policy lab at Dalhousie University.

Korede's research interest focus on social determinants of health especially food insecurity and public policy. Her previous academic

achievements include BSc. In Nutrition and Dietetics and MSc. Human Nutrition. She has years of experience in teaching and research both in Canada and Nigeria.

Korede aspires to be a public policy advocate and be able to provide evidence that can inform programs and policies to reduce inequalities and better the health of minority groups.

She is a wife and a mother of 3 boys. In her spare time, she enjoys cooking, walking, and spending time with her family.

Morris Beckford



Morris Beckford is an author, partial load professor at Humber College and a PhD candidate at Andrews University School of Leadership researching race, masculinity, and non-profit leadership. His academic journey also includes a Bachelor of Education and a Masters of Adult Education and Community Development.

As a Freirean educator, evaluator and researcher, Morris works in opposition to the banking model of learning by working with all peoples to ensure that their experiences are used to transform systems that maintain oppression. He has designed numerous sessions, evaluations, and activities with such a philosophy. His commitments to education go beyond the classroom. Until recently, Morris was the inaugural co-lead of Humber's employee Resource Group for Black staff and was also a member of Humber's EDI Taskforce and Campus Culture Work Group. His most recent publication focuses on the challenges and dangers of white

normativity and cultural competence as praxis for the non-profit and social serving sector. He has also been a member of several boards including the Mississauga Library Board and Findhelp/ 211 Toronto.

Morris is currently the Vice President, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for The Neighbourhood Group Community Services in Toronto.

LAMP



Jacquie, Tanzina & Jenell from LAMP Community Health Centre. LAMP CHC is community-based organization from Toronto, promoting and advocating for physical, mental and social wellbeing through inclusive, integrated community programs and health care services. LAMP leads the Mississauga-Halton Health Equity Community of Practice and other advocacy tables in the South Etobicoke area focused on building capacity to advance health equity and address Anti-Black Racism. Today they are here to share their journey and learn!

John Ariyo



John Ariyo joined the Province of Nova Scotia in May 2021, and is the Executive Director of Equity and Engagement at the Department of Health and Wellness. The Division's mandate is to ensure community voices, strategic partnerships, and lived experiences continue to inform and shape the government's vision for a more engaging and equitable health system for Nova Scotians.

He is a respected public servant, with track record of leading communities, partners and staff towards shared visions, outcomes, and collective accountability. Prior to joining the province, he played key roles at the City of Hamilton and the City of Mississauga, providing leadership to various public engagement, community, cultural, and equity initiatives. He also worked for Elections Ontario as a Returning Officer.

John previously served as the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Immigrants Working Centre (IWC), the largest settlement agency in the Hamilton region, and as a Director and Treasurer for the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic. He currently sits on the HRM Electoral Boundary Resident Review Panel. He holds a master's degree in development studies, with a Project Management Professional (PMP) designation.

US Consul General Lyra Carr



Lyra S. Carr assumed her duties as Consul General of the U.S. Consulate General in Halifax in July 2021, only the second female Consul General in the Post's 188-year history.

In this role she represents U.S. interests in the four Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island. She also provides consular representation to the French Territorial Collectivity of Saint Pierre and Miquelon.

A career Foreign Service Officer since 2003, Lyra came to Halifax after serving as a Senior Advisor in the Office of Visa Services in Washington DC, where she managed interagency coordination and implementation of immigration policies.

Her overseas assignments included Immigrant Visa Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala, Consular Section Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Albania, Staff Assistant and Political Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan, and Consular Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Peru and the U.S. Embassy in the Dominican Republic. Throughout both her domestic and foreign assignments Lyra has been a passionate advocate of mentoring the next generation of Foreign Service Officers.

She is accompanied in Halifax by her husband, a fellow Foreign Service Officer, their two sons, and their adopted cat and dog from Albania.

Mr. Dorbrene O'Marde



Dorbrene E. O'Marde is chairperson of the government appointed Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Commission with mandate, inter alia to: 'organize activities to include education and awareness programmes concerning reparations for the enslavement of our ancestors and establish links with organizations with similar mandates.' He was recently appointed as an Ambassador-at-large with responsibility for the national reparatory justice programme.

He is one of three vice-presidents of the CARICOM Reparations Commission where he coordinates the work of the member national committees/commissions - maintaining a regional approach to the reparations claim on Europe for the crimes against humanity of the slave trade, slavery, and the genocide of indigenous peoples. His main interests are in understanding the legacies of enslavement as manifested in both the health outcomes and cultural behaviour of Afro-Caribbean descendants.

He is a graduate of The University of the West Indies, the University of Toronto and holds a Master's degree in Public Health from Tulane University.

He is a cultural worker - playwright, director and producer of both theatre and music. He is also a calypso writer, judge, and analyst. He is a published author. He was awarded the Sunshine Award 'Friends of the Arts' for his commitment to creativity development and his consistent calls for the crafting of implementable cultural policies and programmes - and recently the President of the St. Martin Book Fair Award - presented to individuals and institutions whose work is noted for its excellence and for combining literary, cultural, and liberation components in the service of progress, of their people or nation, and of humanity.

Professionally, O'Marde is a management consultant offering services in various sectors nationally and regionally.

Veronica Marsman



In January 2017, Veronica Marsman retired as the Executive Director of the Akoma Family Centre, a children's residential facility after 7 years, to assume the position of Property Manager with Akoma Holdings. As Property Manager, Veronica has responsibility to manage and develop 320 acres of property. Prior to working at Akoma Veronica retired from the provincial Department of Community Services with over 27 years' experience in several positions from a front-line child protection social worker to a Manager of 3 District Offices in HRM with budget responsibilities of up to 15M.

In the volunteer sector, Veronica has been on several community boards and initiatives. She is the Co-Manager of the African Nova Scotia COVID-19 Initiative where she works with Community Coordinators throughout the province to ensure people of African descent are vaccinated and remain safe from the pandemic. She is also a member of the Richard Preston Centre for Excellence. Veronica until recently was the Past President of the Nova Association of Black Social Workers and was previously the Co-Chair of the Health Association of African Canadians. Veronica is the founding Member of the SEARCH (Support, Education, and Appreciation of Race Culture and Heritage) Support Group for White parents with Bi-Racial/Black children and the first Black President of the Canadian Association of Social Workers.

Veronica holds a BA, BSW and MSW degrees from Dalhousie University. She was married to the late Eric Murphy, and they had two adult daughters, Jasmine & Nadine, 2 grandchildren who are the love of her life and 5 adult stepchildren.

Tanya McHarg



Tanya McHarg has been a registered Social Worker for the past 21 years. She obtained her Sociology degree with Honors from St. Thomas University. Her thesis work focused on Anti-Black Racism within law enforcement and the impact on holistic health. She completed her Bachelor of Social Work Degree from the University of Calgary and began her career in the homeless sector. From there, Tanya moved into Child Intervention using Signs of Safety to address protection concerns while keeping family units intact.

Tanya is originally from the East Coast with family ties to Annapolis Valley. Recently, Tanya resigned her position with the Government of Alberta, moved her family across the country and accepted the position of Executive Director with The Association of Black Social Workers. She has worked in several roles over the years, with interests in the areas of: poverty, homelessness, addictions, mental health with a special interest in self-compassion and healing work.

Tanya is passionate about bringing attention to Anti-Black Racism and fighting for a fair and equitable society where every person has the opportunity to not just survive but thrive.

Sharon Davis Murdoch



Sharon Davis-Murdoch C.M., is a social justice champion. Retired from the Nova Scotia Public Service, Sharon's political science background and public policy experience informs her work in community. Among her public policy accomplishments was the development of the first Provincial Guidelines for Culturally Competent Primary Health Care in Canada.

Sharon was made a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International in April 2022, recognizing her commitment to service over self.

In December 2021 Sharon was named to the Order of Canada for her dedication to improving the health equity and inclusion of racialized communities in Nova Scotia.

Sharon received Premier's Awards of Excellence in 2007 and 2015. In 2018, Sharon received the Inspiration Award from the Dalhousie School of Public Administration awarded to public servants who have demonstrated a superior dedication and commitment to mentoring, coaching, and inspiring students and public servants over the course of their careers.

Sharon works at the community level and is a founding member and the Co-President of the Health Association of African Canadians. Additional to that role, she now serves as Co-Manager to the Association of Black Social Workers and Health Association of African Canadians, COVID-19

Response and Impact Team. She is also an Advisor to the Halifax Immigrant Partnership, Secretary of the Dartmouth General Hospital Foundation Board and the Health Services Working Group Chair of the African Nova Scotian, People of African Descent Coalition (ANSDPAD). President of Shamardavon Consulting, Sharon was appointed and served as Commissioner on the Independent Commission on Effective Electoral Representation of Acadian and African Nova Scotians. In October 2020 Sharon was selected as one of the Black Women Leaders for the Black Women in Leadership: Sharing and Shaping Our Journey online conference.

Sharon is a proud member of the Dartmouth Community and an even prouder Nana of two growing boys.

Ielaf Khalil

Ielaf is a Research Coordinator at Mount Sinai Hospital. She has a background in kinesiology and public health. She is currently involved in a project on the lived experiences of Black women with breast cancer across Canada and supporting projects to reduce inequities that Black women face in health care spaces.

Professor Juliet Daniel



Dr. Daniel is a Cancer Biologist and the Associate Dean of Research and External Relations in the Faculty of Science at McMaster University. She was trained at Queen's University and University of British Columbia and completed Postdoctoral studies at St Jude Children's Research Hospital and

Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. Prof. Daniel's research is focused on elucidating the role of the transcription factor Kaiso in cancer and normal mammalian development. Her team is also currently elucidating the molecular/genetic causes of the disparities in incidence and poor outcomes of triple negative breast cancer in Black women. In recognition of her research and community service, Prof. Daniel has received several awards including the inaugural Canadian Cancer Society Inclusive Excellence Award, an Honorary Doctor of Science from the University of the West Indies (UWI) Cave Hill, and a WXN Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Award among many others.

Chad Williams



Chadwick "Chad" Williams is a Gastroenterologist and Inflammatory Bowel Disease Specialist at the Dartmouth General Hospital in Dartmouth, NS. Dr. Williams completed his Bachelor of Science and Medical degrees at Dalhousie University prior to leaving to complete his Internal Medicine residency and Gastroenterology residency at the University of Calgary.

Dr. Williams completed an Inflammatory Bowel Disease fellowship at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, California. He currently holds faculty appointments at Dalhousie University and Memorial University of Newfoundland and is a member of several organizations including the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology, the American Gastroenterology

Association. Current Chair of the Canadian Gastroenterology Association
EDI committee. Current Doctors NS Board Member

Dr. Williams is currently the Internal Medicine Site Lead and the
Endoscopy Site Lead at the Dartmouth General Hospital.

Damilola Iduye



Damilola Iduye has been a registered nurse for almost 20 years and has practised in Nigeria and Canada in various clinical settings. She holds a Bachelor of Nursing Science from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, a Master of Nursing with a focus on Health Policy from Dalhousie University, and a Master of Public Health from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Since 2017, she has worked as a Senior Instructor at the Dalhousie School of Nursing, Nova Scotia, where she primarily teaches NURS 2710 (Population Health Nursing) and NURS 4720 (Nursing and Social Responsibility). She is also a Research Scholar with the Healthy Populations Institute's Improving the Health Outcomes of People of African Descent flagship at Dalhousie University.

Currently, Damilola is a PhD in Public Health Science student and C. David Naylor Fellow at the University of Toronto. Her doctoral research focuses on exploring how social and structural determinants of health intersect to shape the experiences of Black Canadians in navigating the healthcare system with consideration for ethnic diversity within the Black population. In 2015, Damilola founded a peer support network for Nova

Scotia internationally educated nurses (IENs) via Facebook. This initiative (The Nova Scotia IENs Network) has grown into a not-for-profit organization with nine IEN leaders and over 800 members.

Outside the IEN community, Damilola has been part of a pan-Canadian working group to unify Black nurses in the country. The outcome of this collaborative partnership is the formation of the Pan-Canadian Association of Nurses of African Descent (PCANAD), a grassroots not-for-profit organization representing various provincial and jurisdictional organizations of nurses of African descent in Canada. PCANAD's member organizations include the Coalition of African, Caribbean, and Black Nurses in British Columbia, the Canadian Black Nurses Network, the Black Nurses Association of Nova Scotia, the Ontario Black Nurses' Network, and the Saskatchewan Association of African, Caribbean, and Black Nurses. Also, PCANAD has representatives from provinces with no existing nursing organization, including Alberta, Manitoba, and New Brunswick. Damilola Iduye is PCANAD's President. Additionally, she has been an active member and one of the leaders of the Black Nurses Association of Nova Scotia since its inception in 2019.

Shelly Philip LaForest



Shelly Philip LaForest has been a Registered Nurse for over 23 years. Originally a diploma-trained nurse, Shelly returned to school to complete a Bachelor of Nursing Degree, a Master of Nursing Degree, and she is

currently enrolled in an Interdisciplinary Social Research PhD program at Trent University. Her research focus is on diversity and health and wellbeing within the nursing field.

As a bedside nurse, Shelly has worked in the Operating Room, on a Burns and Plastics Unit, on a General Surgery, Orthopaedics and Otolaryngology unit and a Vascular Access Team. She has held formal education roles with several post-secondary institutions supporting students in the classroom and in their clinical practice settings. She is now a full-time professor in the Collaborative BScN Nursing degree program in the School of Community and Health Studies at Centennial College. Shelly is a member of the College of Nurses of Ontario, the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, and certified in Vascular Access from the Canadian Vascular Access Association.

Shelly is also actively involved in community organizations and is a Community Advisory Committee member for EpLink (an epilepsy research program), a Board Member for Epilepsy Ontario, and a Data Review Committee member for the Ontario Brain Institute. Shelly founded and is the Executive Director of the Ontario Black Nurses' Network [OBNN] and Program Administrator of the Black Nurses Leadership Institute [BNLI]. Shelly is also the Vice President of the newly established Pan-Canadian Association of Nurses of African Descent [PCANAD] organization. These not-for-profit initiatives have been

instrumental in strengthening the voice of Black Nurses and nursing students in various healthcare forums.

Justin Brooks



Dr. Justin Brooks was born and raised in Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia. He played varsity volleyball at the University of King's college and the University of Guelph before graduating with his Bachelor of Science with Honours in Kinesiology from Dalhousie University. He then went on to continue his education at the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College (CMCC).

During his time as a volleyball athlete, Dr. Brooks suffered an ankle injury and found success in chiropractic treatment. From this point forward he knew he wanted to be a chiropractor to help others get back to achieving their daily goals, optimizing their performance, and keeping them as active as possible. Dr. Brooks is very involved in the volleyball community in Nova Scotia as an athlete, official and coach. He enjoys using sport and activity as a means for combatting both mental and physical health.

During his time at CMCC, Dr. Brooks had the pleasure of being selected to be a treating intern on the Friends For Life Bike Rally. This bike rally was a fundraiser for people living with HIV/AIDS and involved treating a lot of LGBT+ patients. During his time on this bike rally Dr. Brooks became passionate about providing a safe space for all people to feel comfortable being whoever they are while receiving the best care possible.

Dr. Brooks is a certified acupuncture provider and a member of the Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors and the Canadian Chiropractic Association.

Babs Shogbamu



Babs Shogbamu is an African-Canadian community volunteer, current ADAM Chairman and former President of Association of Nigerians in Nova Scotia. He is an oil and gas Registered Engineer and happily married. He loves to build communities without boundaries. He supports continuous community growth and integration while helping to debottleneck various anti-settlement challenges of newcomers in the Maritimes.

DAY 1

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2022

Time	Event
10:00 am – 4:30 pm	Registration
10:00 am – 4:30 pm	Afternoon space held for community tours on your own
Opening Reception: 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm	
5:00 pm	Meet & Greet
	MC – Barb Hamilton-Hinch
	Mi'kmaw Elder to open event conference Barb Hamilton-Hinch – land acknowledgements Zamani Millar and Amariah Bernard-Washington sing The Black National Anthem
	African Libation – Wayn Hamilton
	DPAD welcomes everyone
	Owen "O'Sound" Lee performance Opening remarks (HAAC – Sharon, ABSW – Rachele, HPI – Dr. Barb) Her Honour Mayann E. Francis ADM Provo Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness, Jeaninne Lagasse Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care, The Hon Barbara Adams Minister of Health Canada, The Hon Jean-Yves Duclos
	Damilola Iduye introduces the Keynote Speaker
	Keynote speaker – Notisha Massaquoi – includes Q & A's
	Damilola Iduye thanks the Keynote speaker
	NS Brotherhood/Sisterhood – Dr. Ron Milne
	Barb to introduce tomorrow's agenda & provide closing remarks
	Networking Time

DAY 2

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2022

Time	Event
8:00 am	Breakfast
9:00 am	<p>Barb to provide opening remarks and housekeeping items</p> <p>Barb introduces the Keynote Speaker</p> <p>Keynote by Dr. Jonathan Metz: Structural Determinants of Health (Includes Q&A's)</p> <p>Interdisciplinary Centre for Black Health Jude Mary Cenat</p> <p>Peer Review HPI Journal and Call for Papers – Tari</p> <p>Sign up for Table Talks (If you have not already)</p> <p>Evaluation Conversation</p>
Networking Break (Lead by community fitness/students) – Joy Chiekwe	
	<p>Table Talks – What Does Black Health Mean (Guiding Questions for facilitators) – Café Style (Discussion)</p> <p>Health Policy – Rhonda Atwell</p> <p>Health Services – Camilia Watkins</p> <p>Health Education – Dr. Ifeyinwa Mbakgou</p> <p>Mental Health – Robert Wright</p> <p>Mental Health – Lana MacLean</p> <p>TriCouncil Research SSHRC – Dr. OmiSoore/Dr. Barb</p> <p>Gender Violence– Dr. Adowa Onuora</p>
12:00 pm	LUNCH (presentation of Interpretive Dance) – Joy Chiekwe
1:00 pm	Plenary with graduate students and recent graduates – Terrence Lewis- Facilitator, Tari Ajadi, Keisha Jefferies, Chelsea States, Korede Esan, Dele Bello, Vincent Mousseau
STRETCH BREAK (Lead by community fitness/students)	
	Toronto Based Projects– Morris Beckford (The Neighbourhood Group Community Service) and LAMP (Jacquelin St. Kitts, Tanzina Islam and Jenell Austin)
	<p>John Ariyo – Race Based Data, MSI Data, Health Equity Framework, Health Equity Metrics and Indicators</p> <p>Steve Ashton – IWK – speaks</p>
	Refreshment Break
	Sharon to introduce US Consul General – Lyra S. Carr
	Closing Remarks by Barb
	Dinner on your own & free time

DAY 3

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2022

Time	Event
7:45 am	Breakfast
9:00 am	Barb to bring greetings/land acknowledgement Michelle Williams – DPAD – short presentation on historical context (15 minutes) - how our history has led us to where we are today
	Damilola Iduye introduces Dr. Gwenetta Curry
	Keynote: Dr. Gwenetta Curry (University of Edinburgh)
	Mr. Dorbrene O'Marde (Reparations – UWI) (Virtual)
Networking Break (Lead by community fitness/students) – Joy Chiekwe	
	Local projects – Moderator – Dr. OmiSoore Dryden - ABSW/HAAC – COVID-19 Initiatives – Veronica Marsman – Virtual - African Nova Scotian Health Strategy Update – Rhonda - ABSW- Tanya McHarg - HAAC – Sharon Davis Murdoch (7-10 minutes presentation and Q&A time)
12:00 pm	LUNCH (presentation from PLANS)
	Community-based Projects: Black History Learning Journey– Sylvia Parris – Drummond, JSWG/ANSJI – Robert Wright, Breast Cancer – Toronto, Housing (Affordable Housing) – Curtis Whiley. (7-10 minutes presentation and Q&A time)
	Community Table Talks (Concurrent/Café session): Justice – Robert Wright, Housing – Land Titles – Curtis Whiley, Education – BEA President – Karen Hudson/ DBDLI– Sylvia Parris – Drummond, Immigration – UACWA – Daisy Doring, ADAM – Babs, Employment – Jeviere Gordon, Child Welfare – Emma Beukema, Environment – SEED – Vanessa Hartley/Louise Delisle, Spirituality – Reverend Debbie Simmonds, Youth – ACCE – Lindell Smith
STRETCH BREAK (Lead by community fitness/students)	
	Facilitator: Timi Idris Black Health Professions Plenary – Black Physicians of Nova Scotia – Chad WilliamsPan, Canadian Association of Nurses of African Descent –Damilola Iduye, Keisha Jefferies– Black Nurses Association of Nova Scotia, Shelly Philip LaForest– Ontario Black Nurses Network, Justin Brooks–Chiropractor, Stephanie Bizzeth – OT, Korede Akindoju – Physiotherapist.
	Conference wrap-up
	Reception & Closing Dinner