

BCHS Honours National Indigenous Peoples Day

Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS) is honoured to recognize National Indigenous Peoples Day. We join communities across the country to learn more about the rich culture and heritage of Indigenous peoples and embrace the era of reconciliation.

June 21 marks the 25th anniversary of National Indigenous Peoples Day – also known as Solidarity Day. This year is a time of sombre mourning following the recent discovery of the remains of 215 Indigenous children at the former Kamloops Residential School site in British Columbia. BCHS mourns the tragic loss of so many Indigenous children within the residential school system and the continued loss experienced by Indigenous survivors and their families.

A major part of the healing journey and true reconciliation is acknowledging the harsh reality of the residential school trauma experienced by Indigenous communities, and the attempts to assimilate an entire culture by eliminating Indigenous language, culture and identity.

Health equity ties directly to the history of Canada and its health care policies which are based on mainstream medicine and not inclusive of Indigenous people.

Dr. Amy Montour is a palliative care hospitalist at BCHS who grew up at Six Nations of the Grand River. She points out, while it is good to be recognized during Indigenous History Month, many Indigenous people feel they are not part of Canada’s history and are viewed widely as an assimilated people.

“We do celebrate Solidarity Day having survived everything we have been through. We are still here and we stand strong together,” said Dr. Montour. “We continue moving forward despite all of the obstacles and trauma we have faced.”

Dr. Montour adds, the health inequity faced by Indigenous people continues every day across Canada and that physicians, nurses and care providers often do not understand that inequity began long before Canada became a nation.

“To address health equity in a meaningful way, we have to look at the core foundations of what defines health and wellness, what our nation is, and ensure there is more than one perspective being considered,” Dr. Montour said.

“As a physician promoting health equity, I am reminded that health science professionals believe we are providing the best care to everyone when in fact, we use a very narrow lens to define quality.”

To really improve and change the health care system, Dr. Montour encourages health care professionals at every level to look inward – first as practitioners with their own perspective and by understanding how they differ from others, and then identifying their own learning gaps.

“Today’s health care practitioners expect patients and their family caregivers to know more than ever before about their own health and the health care system, but it should be the other way around,” said Dr. Montour.

“It is up to individual health care providers to learn about Indigenous peoples in order to meet their needs, taking into consideration cultural differences and health literacy to ensure we are delivering high quality care in the right place at the right time.”

Brant Community Healthcare System has created an Indigenous Medicine Division led by Dr. Montour and Dr. Karen Hill with a newly-hired Indigenous health navigator who will provide face-to-face, personalized support for Indigenous patients and families at BCHS. This includes providing options for Traditional medicine, serving as an advocate and friendly face for Indigenous people and providing a culturally safe space for Indigenous patients and families to ask questions and experience healing just by being together.

The Indigenous health navigator approach will be based on social determinants of health, knowing and understanding Indigenous history and how it impacts people today. The role of the BCHS Indigenous Medicine team will be to mitigate the impacts of a health care system that does not match Indigenous people and communities.



Christina Ingram
Chair, Indigenous Cultural
Safety Committee

BCHS is also being guided by the work of the Indigenous Cultural Safety Committee (ICSC), focused on championing health equity, ensuring the unique needs of local Indigenous communities and addressing priority health concerns.

Employed with BCHS for over 19 years, Christina Ingram is a Six Nations community member who has been chair of the ICSC for the past year. “This work is so important especially with BCHS situated so close to two Indigenous communities and the large urban Indigenous population of Brantford.”

For more information about Indigenous culture, history and communities, please visit:

- [Woodland Cultural Centre](#)
- [Brant Land Trust](#)
- [Six Nations Tourism](#)
- [Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations](#)
- [Cultural History - A Sacred Trust Video](#)

“Every year, approximately 3% of all patients who visit BCHS are Indigenous. As an organization, we are committed to making sure each visit is successful for the patient and their family,” Christina said.

“That is really important to me because Six Nations is my home community and I want the people within my community to feel comfortable, safe and confident coming to BCHS for their health care needs.”

From Dr. Montour’s perspective, there should be no barriers to health care and true equity for all.

“Can you imagine what our world would be like if we could all simply remember the Golden Rule – treat others the way you want to be treated?”

On June 21st, BCHS staff, physicians and volunteers are encouraged to wear orange on National Indigenous Peoples Day. We will observe two minutes and fifteen seconds of silence at 2:15pm to honour Indigenous victims, survivors and families of the residential school system.



Dr. Amy Montour
Palliative Hospitalist at BCHS

