FNHSSM RESPONDS TO PUBLIC APOLOGY FROM THE COLLEGE OF REGISTERED NURSES OF MANITOBA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM) acknowledges today's formal public apology from the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (CRNM) to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples for its role in systemic discrimination and the ongoing harms experienced within Manitoba's health care system.

During today's ceremony, the CRNM recognized that registered nurses "have been part of the problem and must be part of the solution" and acknowledged the profession's role in perpetuating racism, discrimination, and generational harms experienced by Indigenous peoples in health care settings. The college further stated that an apology alone is not enough and committed to developing a reconciliation action plan by the end of 2026.

FNHSSM welcomes this acknowledgment as an important step in recognizing the truth of the experiences that many First Nations people in Manitoba have carried for generations. Across First Nations communities, nursing stations, hospitals, and urban health care environments, First Nations citizens have too often experienced racism, negligence, stereotyping, and mistreatment while seeking care. These experiences have contributed to mistrust in health systems and have had lasting impacts on the health and wellness of First Nations families and communities.

"As First Nations nurses, we know these experiences are not abstract—they are lived realities that many of our people continue to face when accessing care," said FNHSSM Senior Nursing Advisor, Lorraine McLeod. "This apology is important because it publicly acknowledges those harms, but the true measure of reconciliation will be in the actions that follow and the changes our people can feel in every health care setting."

With the apology falling on Indigenous Nurses Day in Manitoba (May 13, 2026), FNHSSM also recognizes the many Indigenous nurses who have long worked to support culturally safe care despite systemic barriers and experiencing challenges and racism within their professional field.

Their leadership and advocacy continue to be central to improving care for First Nations citizens across Manitoba.

“Every First Nations, Inuit, and Métis person deserves to feel heard, cared for, and treated with dignity when they enter a nursing station, clinic, or hospital,” said Wanda Phillips-Beck, FNHSSM's Indigenous Research Chair in Nursing. “We hope today marks the beginning of real change, where First Nations, Inuit and Metis patients no longer have negative experiences from those entrusted to provide care.”

FNHSSM affirms that meaningful reconciliation requires more than acknowledgment. It requires sustained action, accountability, and a commitment to dismantling anti-Indigenous racism across all levels of health care. The organization looks forward to the measurable and reportable actions that follow this apology and remains willing to engage in dialogue and work with the CRNM to support change that advances the health and wellness of First Nations people in Manitoba.

As an organization representing First Nations in Manitoba, FNHSSM will continue to advocate for culturally safe care, systemic accountability, and health systems that respect the dignity, rights, and lived experiences of First Nations peoples.

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