

**MIDDLESEX-LONDON BOARD OF HEALTH**

**REPORT NO. 11-24**

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Board of Health  
**FROM:** Dr. Alexander Summers, Medical Officer of Health  
Emily Williams, Chief Executive Officer  
**DATE:** 2025 February 20

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**ANTI-BLACK RACISM PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT**

**Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 11-25 re: “Anti-Black Racism Plan Implementation Progress Report” for information.*

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**Report Highlights**

- Implementation of the Anti-Black Racism Plan (ABRP) is progressing well through meaningful relationship building, race-based data collection, anti-racism staff capacity building, and cross sector collaboration to increase collective capacity to disrupt Black racism in public health.
- The establishment of an ABRP Advisory Committee composed of Black community members is a significant ongoing mechanism for meaningful engagement and accountability.
- The ABRP demonstrates the MLHU’s commitment to disrupting racism.

**Background**

In 2020, racism was declared a public health crisis by the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) Board of Health. In response, MLHU engaged a consultancy firm for the development of the MLHU Anti-Black Racism Plan (ABRP). In April 2021, the MLHU Board of Health endorsed the ABRP for public health action.

The Anti-Black Racism Plan was developed through the engagement of the African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) communities in London and Middlesex County. A total of 375 ACB community members representing diverse ages, cultures, and linguistic backgrounds, contributed to the plan, ensuring it reflected the views and priorities of the ACB communities. The [ABRP](#)’s 45 recommendations are being implemented within seven related groupings.

Although complex to implement fully, these recommendations are the first step to dismantling anti-Black racism within and by public health. They include and emphasize the importance of

ongoing engagement with ACB community members in a direct and respectful way, placing value on their personal lived experiences and modifying current practices within MLHU.

### **Meaningful Relationship with ACB Communities**

The Health Equity and Reconciliation Team's (HEART) Engagement Strategy and Plan is updated yearly with direct input from ACB community members. Co-creation, collaboration, Black joy and the ABRP's Ways of Working ([ABRP](#) page 6) are pillars of the MLHU approach to engagement. The goal is to increase organizational and community partners' capacity to take action against anti-Black racism with ACB communities and organizations. Examples of engagement mechanisms and collaborative efforts are:

- The ABRP Advisory Committee was formed to guide the MLHU's implementation of the ABRP. Members were recruited from diverse African, Caribbean, Black (ACB) communities in London, Ontario. The committee held its inaugural meeting in January 2022 and has provided indispensable contributions towards the effective implementation of the recommendations on the ABRP. <https://www.healthunit.com/anti-black-racism-plan>
- 2023 Black Joy Art Event – An event co-created with artist Amsa Yaro, WEAN Community Centre, Nigerian Association of London Area, the London Boys and Girls Club was a catalyst for the development of multiple relationships across the ACB communities and organizations.

### **Support the Empowerment of ACB Community Initiatives**

In 2024, the MLHU focused on amplifying, supporting and connecting Black-led initiatives by providing hands-on and technical support. The HEART collaborated closely with [Type DiaBeat It](#), a Black-led organization ensuring “Black Canadians and minority groups are not only given access to but are also equipped with adequate resources to better manage and prevent diabetes.” [WEAN Community Centre](#) was supported with Black youth mental health program development, fundraising activities and community engagement events.

### **Anti-Black Racism Communication**

The HEART has developed and monitored the implementation of the organizational Interpretation policy. It ensures clients from ACB communities can access services in the languages of their preference to improve access and quality of care. Physical and virtual spaces at MLHU are now more reflective of Black culture through the purchase and installation of art made by local Black artists. Social media messaging has been used for key cultural events such as Black History Month. Engagement activities have focused on educating ACB communities about MLHU services.

### **Race-Based Data Collection and Use**

Race-based identity questions are asked during in-person client interactions across four teams at MLHU. Much has been learned about the operational and cultural safety challenges of collecting this information and the ABRP Advisory Committee has provided input at every stage of implementation. A key performance indicator has been integrated into the performance management system to monitor progress. The Population Health Assessment and Surveillance team will work to disaggregate health outcome data by race when sufficient data has been collected. This information can be used in the future to inform planning and resource allocations to address ACB community health needs.

### **Governance, Leadership and Black Health Orientation**

In 2024, the HEART began to deepen their understanding of local Black health priorities with the goal of modifying and orienting services to meet ACB community needs overtime. ACB-oriented

interventions are being co-developed and implemented. Mobile vaccination clinics targeted for ACB community members were run, with the help of local settlement agencies, to increase access to COVID-19 and influenza vaccines in 2024.

### **Employment Systems to Support Black Employees**

MLHU has established an anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policy and is currently implementing training for all leadership to enhance cultural safety; cultural humility; and, understanding of anti-Black racism, anti-oppression, and decolonization. In addition, all MLHU staff are required to complete anti-Black racism training. The organization has also prioritized the creation of safe spaces and support for staff who identify as ACB.

### **Cross Sector Collaboration**

The MLHU has coordinated efforts with local, regional and provincial groups advancing Black health – London Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph’s Hospital, the City of London, Ontario Health Regional Black Health Network, and Public Health Ontario. These collaborations are advancing shared staff learning opportunities, policy development, race-based data collection and engagement best practices.

### **Next Steps within 2025**

- Engagement strategies will focus on deepening understanding of health issues impacting ACB communities and the ways in which MLHU addresses those issues to continue the process of modifying services to better meet the needs of ACB communities. This will include cross sectoral collaboration with partners such as LHSC, St Joseph’s Hospital, the City of London, and Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion to maximize the impact of actions supporting Black health.
- The race-based data collection project will be working to develop data governance mechanisms including policy and procedure finalization in collaboration with the ABRP Advisory Committee and based on the [EGAP](#) framework. Additionally, understanding what is required to disaggregate health-outcome data by race will be addressed in 2025.
- The HEART will develop an anti-Black racism communication campaign that will target the Middlesex-London community to raise awareness of how racism impacts the health of ACB communities and convey MLHU’s anti-Black racism commitment as an organizational priority.

This report was written by the Health Equity and Reconciliation Team.



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**This report refers to the following principle(s) set out in Policy G-490, Appendix A:**

- The Health Equity standard as outlined in the [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability](#).
- The following goal or direction from the [Middlesex-London Health Unit's Strategic Plan](#):  
We have strong relationships with our partners and are trusted by our community.  
Direction 1.1: Facilitate meaningful and trusting relationships with prioritized equity-deserving groups, specifically Black and Indigenous communities

**This topic has been reviewed to be in alignment with goals under the Middlesex-London Health Unit's [Anti-Black Racism Plan](#) and [Taking Action for Reconciliation](#), specifically all ABRP recommendation groupings and TAFR plan recommendations within the Relationship, Workforce Development, Supportive Environments, and Research grouping.**