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## President's Message. Striving for excellence in continuing education on indigenous health

At our fall meeting, the SRPC Council felt strongly that we need to do more as an organisation to improve care for Indigenous patients and communities. This means not only working within our health systems and communities to increase access to services but also making sure that no matter where Indigenous patients have contact with a physician or other health professional, that their experience is safe and respectful, and the care they receive is high quality. Unfortunately, for many Inuit, First Nations and Métis patients and families, this is often not the case.

As an organisation, the SRPC is working to support initiatives that are grounded in anti-racism and that respond, in concrete ways, to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action. One of the strengths of the SRPC has always been in providing high quality, rurally-relevant education for our members. Given this, we are taking some much needed steps to provide our membership with access to knowledge that is critical for providing culturally safe care to Indigenous communities.

Our re-invigorated Indigenous Health Committee has been working to develop an education series. In December 2020, we held an introductory session, 'Moving towards Cultural Safety, Reconciliation, and

Anti-racism' led by Dr. Darlene Kitty along with guest speakers Dr. Nadin Gilroy and Dr. Baijayanta Mukhopadhyay. Over 250 members registered to attend. To me, this is an encouraging sign that we are on the right track.

In the evaluation, participants indicated that they would like more opportunities to learn and engage with clinical and system issues related to Indigenous health, including Indigenous child health, addressing structural racism, and teaching cultural safety. To meet this need, we have planned a series of virtual sessions in the lead up to our annual conference in April, which itself will have an Indigenous health stream.

The SRPC has an important role in addressing the TRC's Calls to Action, particularly those focused on ensuring cultural competency in the education of students and health professionals. For members who are unfamiliar with the 94 Calls to Action, I would encourage you all to visit [http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf) to familiarise yourself. As physicians in rural Canada, we are leaders in our communities, are influential within our local health systems, and act as educators for the next generation's health professionals. Individually and as an organisation, we have a responsibility to become educated in issues related to Indigenous cultures and health to be useful contributors to reconciliation in Canada.

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