

### Indigenous cultural safety corner

We are learning about the importance of [storytelling](#) as a cornerstone of Indigenous ways that is often included in Indigenous ceremonies, teachings and learning. First Nations, Inuit and Métis people pass history and cultural teachings to the next generation through the oral tradition of storytelling. Songs, drumming, dance, pictures, medicine wheels and other symbols are all used in storytelling. Traditionally, stories are told by Elders, often referred to as Knowledge Keepers, or by community members who have earned the title of Storyteller. Storytelling is a foundation for relationship building and experiential learning and may be part of holistic healing for Indigenous patients and clients at VCH.

### February is Black History Month

[Black History Month](#) is an opportunity to celebrate and learn about the achievements, contributions and lived experiences of Black Canadians including colleagues, patients and clients at VCH. Recognizing that anti-Black racism continues to be a [key social determinant of health](#), we have a role to play in building a health-care system that is accessible and responsive to the needs of our diverse population and one that is free of racism. VCH has expanded its [resource library](#) to support anti-racism and continued learning around identifying and addressing racism in health care.

Register for the upcoming webinar, [“Beyond Representation: Celebrating Black Excellence in BC Health Care.”](#)

### HAMAC continuing education: Understanding bias

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team presented the next topic in their mini-education series for the HAMAC – understanding bias in health care. We all hold biases, which range from conscious to unconscious assumptions, beliefs, attitudes and even stereotypes about individuals or groups of people. These biases are shaped and reinforced by factors such as our own experiences, the experiences of others, our communities and broader relationships and the influence of powerful structures (e.g., our educational system, public policies and the media/literature we are exposed to). By promoting awareness of our own biases and questioning how these biases impact patient experiences, we are able to more fully address inequity in health care. The HAMAC was asked to reflect on past situations where unconscious bias may have shown up in a clinical setting, if they were aware of it at the time and how they may approach the situation differently in the future. Understanding and recognizing bias is key to [responding respectfully](#) to situations or remarks that may be disrespectful and harmful to patients and clients receiving care at VCH. This also applies to colleagues and those we teach. Addressing bias is the responsibility of all health care providers to ensure our health care system is safe and free of discrimination that perpetuates health disparities.

### HAMAC priorities

As the new fiscal year approaches, the HAMAC had a preliminary discussion about its priority areas for 2024-25. Currently, our three priorities include health human resources, specifically around recruitment and retention, quality and health and wellness of staff. The HAMAC was asked to consider if these still resonate as our top areas of focus and if there are other areas we should consider as a priority. The HAMAC team is collating feedback and will bring the discussion back to the next HAMAC meeting for decision.

### Nurse Practitioners (NPs) at VCH

As part of a spotlight series at HAMAC that highlights the individual medical staff professions at VCH, the HAMAC received a presentation from leaders in the Department of NPs on the history and regulation of the profession, NP practice and distribution across the health authority and portfolio successes. The HAMAC discussed the importance of NPs and the essential role they play as autonomous providers in delivering health care to patients and clients at VCH. Funding for acute care NP positions was identified as a key barrier in the expansion of NPs across VCH. Better integration and collaboration between NPs and other medical staff professions such as physicians was highlighted as a key component of high-functioning teams that can deliver the best care possible. [Learn more about NPs and the key role they play in our health-care system.](#)

### Welcome to HAMAC!

#### Dr. Sonia Yeung

Appointed as  
Regional Dept. Head,  
Ophthalmology for a  
three-year term



Read the [2023 Unregulated Drug Deaths in BC report](#) from the BC Coroners Service.