



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MHRC releases principles on a human rights based approach to manage the COVID-19 pandemic

Today, the Manitoba Human Rights Commission released a document outlining principles and actions for a human rights based approach to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. Premised on both domestic and international human rights law, the document calls on governments and decision-makers to put human rights at the centre of their responses to COVID-19. “We are in the midst of an unprecedented global event. As we do our best to manage this virus and “flatten the curve,” it is incumbent on all of us to ensure that our responses to the COVID-19 pandemic do not create or exacerbate the inequities impacting our most vulnerable communities, says Karen Sharma, A/Executive Director of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

Building on the work of human rights commissions across Canada, the document highlights six key principles that inform a human rights approach to pandemic management, including:

1. Approach the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 as a human rights obligation
2. Respect Indigenous rights
3. Set reasonable limits on measures that infringe rights
4. Protect vulnerable communities
5. Respond to racism, ableism and xenophobia
6. Strengthen human rights accountability and oversight.

The document also highlights a number of key actions that will help realize a human rights-based approach to the COVID-19 pandemic. “This list of actions is not exhaustive, but we believe they represent an important starting point for governments and decision-makers, in particular in the provision of health and educational services, in correctional facilities and government-run institutions, in the protection of privacy and with respect to income supports” said Sharma.

“It is promising that governments and health care providers have proactively undertaken a number of these actions. Building on our collective responses to this pandemic through a human rights based approach will ensure that we lift everyone, including our most marginalized, out of this pandemic.”

For media inquiries, please contact hrc@gov.mb.ca.

ATTACHMENT: *A human rights based approach to the COVID-19 pandemic: Principles and actions*