**CADHO Statement: Welcoming Ottawa Week 2025**

Creating an Environment Where Canadians of African Descent Experience Equitable Health Outcomes

**About Welcoming Ottawa Week (WOW)**

Welcoming Ottawa Week (WOW) is an annual city-wide, week-long celebration featuring dialogues, cultural events, sports, film screenings, and more, all designed to showcase the genuine welcome and hospitality of Ottawans to newcomers.

Launched by the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP) in 2013 and proclaimed by the Mayor of Ottawa, WOW offers meaningful opportunities for new and long-time residents to connect, share, and build inclusive communities together.

WOW 2025 will take place from June 16 to 30, 2025.

For full event details, visit: <https://olip-plio.ca/what-we-do/welcoming-ottawa-week/>

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As we gather for Welcoming Ottawa Week 2025, the Canadians of African Descent Health Organization (CADHO) reaffirms our deep commitment to fostering a more inclusive, just, and equitable healthcare system for all, especially for Black immigrants and newcomers to Canada.

Canadians of African descent, including recent immigrants, continue to face persistent barriers to equitable health and wellness. These challenges are rooted in the legacies of anti-Black racism, systemic discrimination, socio-economic inequities, and a healthcare system that often fails to reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of those it serves. Black newcomers, in particular, confront unique settlement stressors, such as limited access to culturally responsive care, employment discrimination, housing insecurity, and the cumulative impacts of migration trauma, all of which directly affect health outcomes.

We cannot build a healthy society without recognizing and dismantling these barriers.

CADHO envisions a Canada where Black immigrants and all people of African descent are welcomed, respected, and supported to thrive, in health and in life. To move toward this vision, we call on governments, health institutions, community partners, and the public to act with urgency and purpose. Equity is not a passive outcome, it is the result of intentional design, investment, and community-led leadership.

**Our Commitment and Call to Action**:

1. Culturally Safe and Responsive Care

Health systems must integrate culturally safe practices that acknowledge and respond to the lived realities of Black communities. This includes hiring more Black health professionals, supporting culturally specific health models, and confronting anti-Black racism in clinical and institutional settings.

2. Equity in Social Determinants of Health

Equitable health outcomes are impossible without addressing disparities in housing, employment, education, and income. Black immigrants often face intersecting forms of discrimination in these areas; policies must be designed with equity at the core.

3. Data Justice and Community Engagement

We need disaggregated race-based health data, co-developed and governed by Black communities, to expose inequities and inform targeted action. Nothing about us, without us.

4. Mental Health Supports for Newcomers

The migration journey often carries psychological burdens. Black newcomers must have access to mental health services that are trauma-informed, stigma-free, and delivered by professionals who understand their experiences.

5. Anti-Racism as Public Health

Racism is a public health crisis. We urge all sectors to adopt anti-racism policies and accountability frameworks, especially those directly impacting Black communities in healthcare, education, policing, and immigration systems.

This Welcoming Ottawa Week, let us go beyond words of welcome, and work together to build systems that truly include, protect, and uplift Black immigrants and all Canadians of African descent. Health equity is not a special consideration; it is a fundamental right.

CADHO stands ready to partner, advocate, and lead alongside communities across Canada to make this vision a reality.

Together, we can create a Canada where everyone, regardless of origin or race, has the opportunity to live a healthy, dignified, and full life.

By:

Professor Josephine Etowa

President, Canadian of African Descent Health Organization (CADHO)

*Championing inclusive health for all communities*