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# Bill 115

## An Act respecting health equity for Black Ontarians

### Co-sponsors:

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### Private Members' Bill

1st Reading      May 5, 2026

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



## EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill enacts the *Black Health Equity Act, 2026*. Section 2 of the Act provides that the Government of Ontario shall recognize the right of Black residents to equitable, culturally safe and anti-racist healthcare. Section 3 requires the Ministry of Health to develop a Black Health Equity Framework based on this recognition. Among other things, the Framework is required to include annual racial equity audits of all publicly funded health institutions, clear institutional benchmarks for racial equity and enforceable accountability measures for institutions that fail to meet these benchmarks.

Section 4 requires that every public health unit develop an action plan that focuses on methods for reducing anti-Black racism, employ a dedicated Black Health Equity Officer, track racial disparities in vaccination, screening and health promotion access and make racial equity a required metric in public health performance reviews. Section 5 requires hospitals and public health units to develop and implement a plan that includes the creation of a Black-led Patient Advocacy and Protection Unit for the hospital and a process for race-based data collection across all care environments and public reporting of this data. Section 6 requires the Ministry to establish a Black Health Equity Council that holds institutional and government bodies accountable to equity goals and reviews government budgets, policies and legislation through an anti-Black racism lens. Section 7 requires the Government of Ontario to recognize mental health care as a matter of health sovereignty that is not a mere privilege. The Minister of Health is required to develop a plan to train and certify mental health care providers in racial trauma and anti-Black racism, fully cover the costs of culturally responsive mental health services for Black Ontarians and establish Black-led mental health care providers and wellness programs.

Section 8 requires the Ministry to establish a Black Health Equity Inspectorate that investigates and intervenes in institutions exhibiting racial harm, monitors compliance with the requirements of the Act, imposes funding consequences for non-compliance and reports its findings to the Ministry. Section 9 requires the Ministry to establish Black-led Advocacy and Protection Units within hospitals that include staff with knowledge of legal rights and the justice system, that are accessible virtually and in person and that report to the Ministry. Section 10 requires the Ministry to work with unions, post-secondary institutions and regulatory bodies to include anti-Black racism protections in collective agreements, embed race equity in hiring, retention and promotion practices, develop and implement procedures to protect Black staff from retaliation when reporting harm and include racism as a reportable category in workplace violence protocols. Section 11 requires the Government of Ontario to develop a system for survivors of anti-Black racism in health care to have access to justice.

## An Act respecting health equity for Black Ontarians

His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

### Definitions

1 In this Act,

“Minister” means the Minister of Health; (“ministre”)

“Ministry” means the Ministry of Health; (“ministère”)

“regulations” means the regulations made under this Act. (“règlements”)

### Black health equity

2 The Government of Ontario shall recognize the right of Black residents to equitable, culturally safe and anti-racist healthcare.

### Black Health Equity Framework

3 (1) The Ministry shall develop a Black Health Equity Framework based on the principles recognized under section 2.

### Contents

(2) The Black Health Equity Framework shall include the following:

1. Annual racial equity audits of all publicly funded health institutions.
2. Clear institutional benchmarks for racial equity.
3. Enforceable accountability measures for institutions that fail to meet the benchmarks referred to in paragraph 2.
4. The creation of independent enforcement bodies with powers to investigate and sanction publicly funded health service providers.
5. The linking of health service provider funding and, where applicable, executive compensation to race equity outcomes.
6. The establishment of a Black health workforce pipeline in accordance with subsection (3).
7. The establishment of Black healing and wellness hubs in accordance with subsection (4).
8. The development of Black health data infrastructure and ownership protocols in accordance with subsection (5).

### Black health workforce pipeline

(3) The Black health workforce pipeline established under paragraph 6 of subsection (2) shall include the following:

1. Tuition-free training programs for Black students in clinical and allied health fields.
2. Paid placements, internships and mentorships across the health care system.
3. Supports for workplace navigation, leadership advancement and retention.
4. A province-wide Black health talent database to support equitable recruitment.

### Black healing and wellness hubs

(4) Black healing and wellness hubs established under paragraph 7 of subsection (2) shall be governed by community health centres from the Black community and shall incorporate the following:

1. Clinical care, doulas and birthwork, peer support and elder support.
2. Resources for helping to navigate legal issues.
3. A focus on food justice and community wellness.
4. The use of storytelling as a form of mental health care.
5. Services for Black youth, single mothers, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, newcomers to Canada and elders.

### **Black health data infrastructure and ownership protocols**

(5) The Black health data infrastructure and ownership protocols developed under paragraph 8 of subsection (2) shall include the following:

1. Requirements that all health institutions collect, store and publish race-disaggregated data.
2. Protocols for ethical data usage and data ownership developed in consultation with members of Black communities.
3. Measures to ensure funding decisions and structural reform measures are data driven.
4. Measures to publicly report health indicators for the Black community, including figures related to the use of emergency medical services, the number of Black Ontarians without access to primary care and the number of Black Ontarians on wait lists for long-term care.

### **Same**

(6) The Black health data infrastructure and ownership protocols developed under paragraph 8 of subsection (2) shall be developed in partnership with Black communities and a range of Black-led organizations that reflect the diversity of the Black community, including in terms of disability, sexuality and language.

### **Anti-Black racism action plans**

4 Every public health unit shall,

- (a) develop an action plan that focuses on methods for reducing anti-Black racism;
- (b) employ a dedicated Black Health Equity Officer;
- (c) track racial disparities in vaccination, screening and health promotion access; and
- (d) make racial equity a required metric in public health performance reviews.

### **Black health equity implementation plans**

5 Every hospital and public health unit shall develop and implement a Black health equity implementation plan that,

- (a) is based on the principles recognized under section 2;
- (b) includes the creation of a Black-led Patient Advocacy and Protection Unit for the hospital; and
- (c) includes a process for race-based data collection across all care environments and public reporting of this data.

### **Black Health Equity Council**

6 (1) The Ministry shall, no more than 60 days after the day this section comes into force, establish a Black Health Equity Council.

### **Composition**

(2) The Black Health Equity Council shall be composed of members appointed by the Minister.

### **Same**

- (3) The Minister shall ensure that the Black Health Equity Council includes members of the following groups:
1. A range of Black-led organizations that reflect the diversity of the Black community, including in terms of disability, sexuality and language.
  2. Clinicians.
  3. Researchers.
  4. Community advocates.

### **Remuneration and expenses**

(4) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may determine the remuneration and expenses of any person appointed under subsection (2).

### **Functions**

(5) The Black Health Equity Council shall perform the following functions:

1. Hold institutional and government bodies accountable to equity goals.
2. Review government budgets, policies and legislation through an anti-Black racism lens.

### **Formal oversight authority**

(6) The Black Health Equity Council shall be granted formal oversight authority for the purposes of performing the functions set out in subsection (5).

### **Mental health care**

7 (1) The Government of Ontario shall recognize mental health care as a matter of health sovereignty that is not a mere privilege.

### **Plan**

- (2) No more than six months after the day this section comes into force, the Minister shall develop a plan to do the following:
1. Train and certify mental health care providers in racial trauma and anti-Black racism.
  2. Fully cover the costs of culturally responsive mental health services for Black Ontarians.
  3. Establish Black-led mental health care providers and wellness programs.

### **Publication of plan**

(3) The Minister shall ensure the plan developed under subsection (2) is published on a website of the Government of Ontario.

### **Black Health Equity Inspectorate**

8 (1) The Ministry shall, no more than 60 days after the day this section comes into force, establish a Black Health Equity Inspectorate.

### **Functions**

- (2) The Black Health Equity Inspectorate shall perform the following functions:
1. Investigate and intervene in institutions exhibiting racial harm in accordance with the regulations.
  2. Monitor compliance with the requirements under this Act.
  3. Impose funding consequences for non-compliance in accordance with the regulations.
  4. Report its findings to the Ministry.

### **Publication**

(3) The Minister shall ensure that the findings of the Black Health Equity Inspectorate reported under paragraph 4 of subsection (2) are published on a Government of Ontario website.

### **Black-led Advocacy and Protection Units**

- 9 (1) The Ministry shall establish Black-led Advocacy and Protection Units within hospitals that,
- (a) include staff with knowledge of legal rights and the justice system;
  - (b) are accessible virtually and in person; and
  - (c) report to the Ministry.

### **Reporting to Ministry**

(2) In reporting to the Ministry under clause (1) (c), each Black-led Advocacy and Protection Unit shall have independent authority to determine which matters to report on.

### **Mobile units**

(3) Where hospital-embedded units are not feasible due to geography, the Ministry shall establish mobile Black-led Patient Advocacy and Protection Units that meet the requirements set out in subsections (1) and (2) and cover multiple institutions within underserved areas to ensure continuity of care.

### **Work with unions and other bodies**

- 10 The Ministry shall work with unions, post-secondary institutions and regulatory bodies to do the following:
1. Include anti-Black racism protections in collective agreements.
  2. Embed race equity in hiring, retention and promotion practices.
  3. Develop and implement procedures to protect Black staff from retaliation when reporting harm.
  4. Include racism as a reportable category in workplace violence protocols.

### **Reparative justice and redress**

11 The Government of Ontario shall develop a system for survivors of anti-Black racism in health care to have access to justice that includes the following:

1. Survivor-led processes rooted in dignity, truth-telling and accountability.
2. Financial compensation for survivors.

3. Public acknowledgement of anti-Black racism in health care.
4. Systemic reforms.
5. Monitoring of institutional participation and publication of compliance reviews.

**Regulations**

**12** The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations,

- (a) governing investigations and interventions for the purposes of paragraph 1 of subsection 8 (2);
- (b) governing funding consequences for the purposes of paragraph 3 of subsection 8 (2).

**Appropriation required**

**13** The following provisions do not apply unless money has been appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose of those provisions:

1. Paragraph 2 of subsection 3 (3).
2. Subsection 6 (4).
3. Paragraph 2 of subsection 7 (2).
4. Paragraph 2 of section 11.

**Commencement**

**14** This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

**Short title**

**15** The short title of this Act is the *Black Health Equity Act, 2026*.