

FEBRUARY

AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH

EVERY FEBRUARY, Nova Scotia celebrates African Heritage Month (called “Black History Month” federally). This month provides an opportunity to honour the culture, legacy, achievements and contributions of African Nova Scotian communities.

The 2024 African Heritage Month theme, “Our Smiles, Our Joy, Our Resilience as African Nova Scotians,” outlines the spirit of perseverance that people of African descent have demonstrated over the centuries in our province.

In recent decades, African-Canadian contributions have been acknowledged informally, however Nova Scotia has set a path for Canada’s recognition of African Heritage Month. Our province has been a leader in the promotion and recognition of African heritage in Canada.

Some Nova Scotian efforts include:

- 1985 – Official opening night of Black History Month at the North Branch Library
- 1987 – First meeting of the Black History Month Association
- 1988 – First Black History Month in Nova Scotia
- 1994 – Black History Month Association officially incorporated in Nova Scotia
- 1996 – Black History Month renamed to African Heritage Month in Nova Scotia

Connection to Doctors Nova Scotia’s work

Anti-Black racism continues to drive health inequities in Canada. This type of racism, rooted in an unjust distribution of power, resources and opportunities that discriminates against Black communities, continues to fuel poor health outcomes for racialized Canadians.

Conversations to inform the Government of Nova Scotia’s Health Equity Framework revealed:

- Black people experience overt and subtle racism in many ways, as both patients and providers
- Black patients are dismissed, ignored, passed over in triage, misdiagnosed
- intergenerational trauma leads many to not seek care
- inadequate Black representation in the health-care system, especially in senior leadership, is slowing down work to combat anti-Black racism
- community-based supports for African Nova Scotian communities, especially related to mental health, are not readily available

Doctors Nova Scotia’s role in this work includes continuing staff education, examining our internal biases, supporting Black physician communities and ongoing EDIA advocacy.

Find more information on the official website of the Nova Scotia African Heritage Month Information Network at tinyurl.com/DNS-AHM-web.



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as African Nova
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is the 2024 African
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theme



Find more EDIA resources, videos and tools in the DNS SharePoint EDIA Hub.