

OIPRD to review OPP practices for obtaining voluntary DNA samples

CNW ? The Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) is conducting a review of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) practices for obtaining voluntary DNA samples from specific groups of people during criminal investigations.

?Allegations that dozens of migrant workers who were asked to submit to DNA tests for a criminal investigation did not match the description of the suspect except for their dark skin colour, raises the spectre of racial profiling and Charter rights issues. I am undertaking a systemic review that will not only investigate the immediate issues raised, but also dig deeper to explore underlying causes and broader practices to determine whether systemic failings have occurred,? said Gerry McNeilly, Independent Police Review Director.

The review will examine public complaints filed, and review and analyze evidence collected from OPP investigations, including audio and video recordings, photographs, documents, interviews and forensic evidence. The review will examine OPP policies, procedures and practices, training material and instruction, along with relevant case law, reports, reviews, articles, documents, research, data and practices from other jurisdictions. The review will also consider submissions from stakeholders and the public. A final report summarizing the findings of the review and outlining recommendations for the overall improvement of police practices will be released to the public.

The Police Services Act gives the Independent Police Review Director the power to examine and review issues of a systemic nature that are the subject of or give rise to public complaints. It also allows the Director to make recommendations regarding these issues to Ontario's Solicitor General, Attorney General, the OPP Commissioner, chiefs of police, police services boards and other persons or organizations, in order to enhance public confidence and trust in police and policing.

The OIPRD receives, manages and oversees all public complaints against the police in Ontario. This includes Ontario's municipal and regional police services and the Ontario Provincial Police. Visit the OIPRD website at OIPRD@ontario.ca to learn more about the public complaints system.