

2020 DECLARATION (for FCPH)

Racism is a Public Health Crisis

WHEREAS, Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of people, entire populations and their communities. These populations can be as small as a local neighborhood, or as big as an entire country or region of the world;

WHEREAS, public health work is achieved by promoting healthy lifestyles, researching disease and injury prevention, and detecting, preventing and responding to infectious diseases;

WHEREAS, public health professionals try to prevent problems from happening or recurring through implementing educational programs, recommending policies, administering services, and limiting health disparities thru the promotion of equitable and accessible healthcare¹;

WHEREAS, racism and segregation in Ohio and Franklin County have exacerbated a health divide resulting in Black Ohioans having lower life expectancies than White Ohioans; being far more likely than other races to die prematurely (before the age of 75); and to die of heart disease or stroke, according to the Health Policy Institute of Ohio. Black Ohioans also have higher levels of infant mortality, lower birth weights, are more likely to be overweight or obese, have adult diabetes, and have long-term complications from diabetes. A contemporary example of such disparity is highlighted by preliminary data in Ohio that suggest African Americans are dying at a disproportionately higher rate from the coronavirus^{2 3};

WHEREAS, communities of color, those of low social economic status and those that suffer from disabilities, are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of their social determinants of health — health inequities stemming from economic stability, education, physical environment, food and access to health care systems⁴;

WHEREAS, race is a social construct with no biologic basis⁵;

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism is internalized or interpersonal; systemic racism is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks, this unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, while unfairly

¹ <https://www.cdcfoundation.org/what-public-health>

² Health Policy Institute of Ohio, 2017 Health Value Dashboard (Health equity profiles).

³ <https://www.policymattersohio.org/research-policy/sustainable-communities/health-health-equity/building-a-healthy-ohio>

⁴ Id.

⁵ García JJ, Sharif MZ. Black Lives Matter: A Commentary on Race and Racism. *AmJ Public Health.* 2015; 105: e27–e30. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2015.302706)

giving advantages to other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources^{6 7};

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent racial discrimination influencing many areas of life, including housing, education, employment and criminal justice; and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism itself is a social determinant of health⁸;

WHEREAS, more than 100 studies have linked racism to worse health outcomes⁹;

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association (APHA) launched a National Campaign against Racism¹⁰; and the Canadian Public Health Association recognizes racism's contribution to disparate health outcomes¹¹;

WHEREAS, the Chief Mission Officer of YWCA Columbus, in an Opinion Editorial titled "COVID-19 inequalities show racism should be declared a public health crisis", the Chief Mission Officer stated that "Declaring racism as a public health issue is the long-term policy response that can outlast this particular moment, redress the wrongs of the past and shepherd us into a healthier, more equitable future¹²";

WHEREAS, with support from the Board of Health (BOH), Franklin County Public Health has adopted in its 2019-2021 Strategic Plan, one goal of "Equity" as the foundation for conducting the daily work of the agency and as its north star, in 2019 convened a Health Equity Committee, and in May of 2020 put forth a resolution to adopt a Health and Equity in All Policies policy;

WHEREAS, public health's responsibilities to address racism includes reshaping our discourse and agenda so that we all actively engage in racial justice work; and

WHEREAS, FCPH acknowledges that the health impact of racism in Ohio and Franklin County is a crisis and rises to the definition proposed by Dr. Sandro Galea who notes: "The problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of large scale solutions".¹³

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Franklin County Public Health will:

1. Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire community;

⁶ Jones CP. Confronting Institutionalized Racism. *Phylon*. 2002; 50(1/2):7---22.

⁷ American Public Health Association. Racism and Health. Available at: <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>. Accessed May 2, 2020.

⁸ Flynn, A., Holmberg, S., Warren, D., and Wong, F. REWRITE the Racial Rules: Building an Inclusive American Economy. Roosevelt Institute, 2016.

⁹ Institute of Medicine. Unequal Treatment. <https://www.nap.edu/read/10260/chapter/2#7>. May 2, 2020.

¹⁰ American Public Health Association. Racism and Health. Available at: <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>. Accessed May 2, 2020.

¹¹ (<https://www.cpha.ca/racism-and-public-health>).

¹² <https://www.columbusceo.com/business/20200414/opinion-covid-19-inequalities-show-racism-should-be-declared-public-health-crisis>.

¹³ Galea, Sandro. Crying "Crisis". Dean's Note. Boston University School of Public Health. <https://www.bu.edu.sph/2017/04/23/crying-crisis/>.

2. Conduct an assessment of internal policy and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of FCPH, supported by the BOH in collaboration with Senior Staff and the Health Equity Committee;
3. Establish a glossary of terms and definitions concerning racism and health equity;
4. Work to create an equity and justice-oriented organization, with the BOH and Senior Staff identifying specific activities to embrace diversity and to incorporate antiracism principles across FCPH, leadership, staffing and contracting;
5. Incorporate into the organizational structure a plan for educational efforts to understand, address and dismantle racism, in order to undo how racism affects individual and population health and provide tools to assist FCPH staff, contractors, and its jurisdictions on how to engage actively and authentically with communities of color;
6. Advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and supports local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism;
7. Work to build alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encourages other local, state, regional and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis;
8. Promote community engagement, actively engaging citizens on issues of racism, and providing tools to engage actively and authentically with communities of color;
9. Commit to review all portions of codified ordinances through a racial equity lens;
10. Commit to conduct all human resources, vendor selection and grant management activities with a racial equity lens including reviewing all internal policies and practices such as hiring, promotions, leadership appointments and funding;
11. Promote racially equitable economic and workforce development practices;
12. To always promote and support all policies that prioritize the health of all people, especially people of color by mitigating exposure to adverse childhood experiences, trauma in childhood and ensuring implementation of Health and Equity in All Policies;
13. Train all BOH members, staff, funders and grantees on workplace biases and how to mitigate them;
14. Partner and build alliances with local organizations that have a legacy and track record of confronting racism;
15. Encourage community partners and stakeholders in the education, employment, housing, criminal justice and safety arenas to recognize racism as a public health crisis and to implement portions or all of this declaration;
16. Identify clear goals and objectives, including specific benchmarks, to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity; and
17. Establish alliances and secure adequate resources to successfully accomplish the above activities.

Fiscal impact: The Franklin County Board of Health will consider in the organization's budget allocating adequate financial resources to accomplish these activities.

Adopted at the Franklin County Board of Health Meeting on May 12, 2020.