

# The Columbus Dispatch

---

## Opinion

### **Letter: Lutheran Social Services recognizes cost of racism**

Posted May 21, 2020 at 4:10 AM

Lutheran Social Services stands with Franklin County Public Health in declaring racism a public health crisis ([Dispatch article](#), Friday). Research for more than two decades has evidenced that systemic racism creates health inequities for people of color.

Unequal access to health care, affordable housing and employment as well as food insecurity resulting from social segregation, immigration policy and intergenerational effects sustain a system that results in poorer health outcomes and decreased life expectancy for minorities.

At LSS we see the consequences of racism as a systemic issue played out in the lives of individuals every day. Our food pantries, homeless and domestic violence shelters, and federally qualified health center serve a disproportionate number of racial and ethnic minority members. This is not a reflection of individual differences but of a societal structure that provides unequal opportunity and resources in communities of color.

To create social or systemic change, a problem must be named and factors that contribute to maintaining the problem identified. Franklin County Public Health

has done that through this declaration, as well as formulate a plan that begins to address racism and the resulting health inequities.

LSS stands ready to partner in this work and supports the agency and a vision for a more equitable, healthy community.

Sue Villilo, assistant vice president of Community-Based Services, Lutheran Social Services, Gahanna