

ALPHA 2021 Reconciliation 2021-06

Racism is a public health crisis in Alaska

Whereas, Alaska is home to one of the most diverse populations in the country, including the most diverse census tract in the United States;^[1]

Whereas, racism is a social determinant of health. The experience of interpersonal and structural race-based discrimination has been consistently associated with poorer health through several causative pathways;^[2]

Whereas, Alaska Native, American Indian, and Black communities experience disproportionate years lost due to premature death of any racial groups in Alaska;^[3]

Whereas, the infant mortality rates for Black and Alaska Native babies in Alaska is approximately twice as high as the infant mortality rate for white babies in Alaska;^[4]

Whereas, Black, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian people in Alaska are disproportionately diagnosed with COVID-19;^[5]

Whereas, Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian people in Alaska are hospitalized due to COVID-19 at disproportionate rates;^[5]

Whereas, Pacific Islander and Black adults in Alaska experience obesity at disproportionately higher rates;^[6]

Whereas, Black adults report being mentally unhealthy at disproportionately higher rates in Alaska;^[7]

Whereas, law enforcement violence is a public health issue driven by structural and interpersonal racism;^[8]

Whereas, Alaska as a state had second highest rate of Black people killed by police between 2013 and 2019;^[9]

Whereas, Alaska as a state had the second highest number of Indigenous people killed by police between 2013 and 2019;^[9]

Whereas, focused, coordinated, and expansive public health action is required to eliminate racism-based health disparities;^[10]

Whereas, communities and states across the country have declared racism a public health crisis as one step towards addressing long-standing racism-based health disparities;

Whereas, the American Public Health Association recognizes racism as an ongoing public health crisis and a barrier to health equity;

Therefore, be it resolved that we, the members of the Alaska Public Health Association, on this date recognize racism as a public health crisis in Alaska.

Therefore, be it further resolved that the Alaska Public Health Association asks the State of Alaska to declare racism a public health crisis and take immediate action to alleviate this crisis, including through resource allocation and policy change led by Alaska Native people and other people of color.

Fiscal and Public Health Impacts: This action will result in minor costs associated with sending this resolution to the Alaska State Department of Health and Social Services, elected officials, and ALPHA's federal, state, tribal, and local partners. This action works towards dismantling systemic racism to build a healthier, safer community - a beloved community - in Alaska.

[1] Farrell, CR (2018) The Anchorage Mosaic: Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Urban North. In: *Imagining Anchorage: The Making of America's Northernmost Metropolis*. University of Alaska Press.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Chad_Farrell/publication/295254164_The_Anchorage_Mosaic_Racial_and_Ethnic_Diversity_in_the_Urban_North/links/5ce808f1299bf14d95b5dfb7/The-Anchorage-Mosaic-Racial-and-Ethnic-Diversity-in-the-Urban-North.pdf

[2] Paradies Y, Ben J, Denson N, Elias A, Priest N, et al. (2015) Racism as a Determinant of Health: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. PLOS ONE 10(9): e0138511. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0138511>

[3] University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings 2018: Alaska. <https://stateofreform.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/2018-County-Health-Rankings-Report-Alaska.pdf>

[4] Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. 2019. *AK-IBIS - Health Indicator Report - Infant Mortality*. [online] ibis.dhss.alaska.gov. Available at: <http://ibis.dhss.alaska.gov/indicator/view/InfMort.Race.html> Accessed 15 October 2020.

[5] Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. 2020. *COVID-19 Alaska Weekly Case Update: Sept. 27 - Oct. 3, 2020*. [online] Available at: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/AKDHSS/bulletins/2a4c66e> [Accessed 15 October 2020].

[6] Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. 2019. *AK-IBIS - Complete Health Indicator Report - Obesity - Adults (18+) (HA2020 Leading Health Indicator: 4B)*. [online] ibis.dhss.alaska.gov. Available at: http://ibis.dhss.alaska.gov/indicator/complete_profile/Obe.html [Accessed 16 October 2020].

- [7] Health, D., 2020. *AK-IBIS - Health Indicator Report - Mental Health - Past 30 Days - Adults (18+)* (HA2020 Leading Health Indicator: 9). [online] Ibis.dhss.alaska.gov. Available at: <http://ibis.dhss.alaska.gov/indicator/view/HlthStatMent.Race.html> [Accessed 16 October 2020].
- [8] American Public Health Association. 2018. *Addressing Law Enforcement Violence As A Public Health Issue*. [online] Available at: <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2019/01/29/law-enforcement-violence> [Accessed 15 October 2020].
- [9] Mapping Police Violence. 2020. *State Comparison Tool — Mapping Police Violence*. [online] Available at: <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/states> [Accessed 16 October 2020].
- [10] Bailey ZD, Krieger N, Agénor M, Graves J, Linos N, Bassett MT. Structural racism and health inequities in the USA: evidence and interventions. *Lancet*. 2017 Apr 8;389(10077):1453-1463. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(17)30569-X. PMID: 28402827.