

**THE CITY OF FREDERICK
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN**

RESOLUTION NO: 20-15

A RESOLUTION concerning

Racism as a Public Health Crisis

BACKGROUND

Race is a social construct with no biological basis¹. Racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism is internalized or interpersonal; and systemic racism is institutional or structural. Racism is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks. It unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources². Racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing, education, employment and criminal justice.

An emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health³. More than 100 studies have linked racism to worse health outcomes. The American Public Health Association (APHA) launched a National Campaign Against Racism⁴. Health equity is achieved when every person has the opportunity to attain his or her full health potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances. Health inequities are reflected in differences in length of life, quality of life, rates of disease, disability and death, severity of disease, and access to treatment.⁵ The American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics have found racism to be a barrier to health equity and have named racism a driving force of how these social determinants of health are distributed. The social determinants of health have been defined by Healthy People 2020 as the social and material factors that influence health, including employment, housing, education, health care, public safety, and food access. These determinants are known to impact life-long health outcomes in individuals beginning even before birth.⁶

¹ 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)

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

³ Flynn, A., Holmberg, S., Warren, D., and Wong, F. *REWRITE the Racial Rules: Building an Inclusive American Economy*. Roosevelt Institute, 2016.

⁴ American Public Health Association. *Racism and Health*. Available at: <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>. Accessed February 20, 2018.

⁵ National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP)

⁶ (The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health Maria Trent, MD, MPH, FAAP, FSAHM,^a Danielle G. Dooley, MD, MPhil, FAAP,^b Jacqueline Dougé, MD, MPH, FAAP,^c SECTION ON ADOLESCENT HEALTH, COUNCIL ON COMMUNITY PEDIATRICS, COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE)

According to the Maryland Department of Health and Hygiene, in Frederick County, Black infants die at three times the rate of White infants. Black women are two times less likely to receive prenatal care than women of any other race. And at every stage of life (by age), Black residents are more likely to die than any other race.⁷

The non-partisan National Partnership for Women and Families has found that in the United States, health and racism are inextricably linked, creating a harmful impact on individuals and communities of color, including unequal access to quality education, employment, livable wages, healthy food, stable and affordable housing, and safe and sustainable communities.⁸

The 2018 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results for Frederick County High School students reported that:

- Black students are least likely to receive preventative health care;
- Students of Color are least likely to eat breakfast once in a span of seven days;
- Students of Color are least likely to eat breakfast seven days in a row;
- Black students are more than two times more likely to experience food frequently not lasting and having no money to get more;
- Black students were least likely to have eaten vegetables recently or on a daily basis;
- Black and Hispanic/Latino students were most likely to be diagnosed with asthma by a medical professional; and
- Black students twice as likely to have member(s) of their household go to jail or prison.

Census data (2017) shows:

- Tracts with the highest Black population consistently have the lowest median income of all City residents;
- Three of the four census tracts in the City with the highest median household income have no Black residents, and management jobs are disproportionately held in those tracts, with 19% in a management role;
- Tracts with the highest rate of unemployment directly correlate to tracts with the highest Black populations and the lowest White populations;
- Management jobs are disproportionately low among Black neighborhoods; and
- Although tracts with the highest Black population have the City's highest rates of school enrollment for Pre-K, 1-4, and high school, they account for the lowest in undergraduate/graduate enrollment and attainment.

According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, although the City's Black population is only 18%, nearly half (41%) of City arrests are of Black individuals.⁹

While there is no epidemiologic definition of "crisis", the health impact of racism clearly rises to the definition proposed by Galea: "The problem must affect large numbers of people, it must

⁷ *Maryland Dept of Health Infant Mortality Rate 2018, p. 4*

⁸ *National Partnership for Woman & Families, Issue Brief, "Advancing Health Equity: Addressing the Role of Structural Racism" (May 2019)*

⁹ *2018 Frederick Police Department arrest data, reported by Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting*

threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of large scale solutions”¹⁰ Local government’s responsibilities to address racism include reshaping our discourse and agenda so that we all actively engage in racial justice work. The City’s collective prosperity depends upon the equitable access to opportunity for every resident regardless of the color of their skin.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF FREDERICK, That:

- (1) Racism is a public health crisis in the City of Frederick that affects all members of our community and deserves action from all levels of government and civil society.
- (2) This Board commits to frank and open discussions of race and the impact of the decisions we make upon racial inequities in our community, that these discussions will be integrated into our daily work together, and that we will address issues of race and racial disparities in a full and forthright manner.
- (3) This Board calls upon all City officials and departments to continue, with urgency, the review of policies and procedures for the purposes of eradicating implicit and explicit racial bias and to develop instead policies and procedures that build racial equity.
- (4) This Board believes City departments should immediately access all available tools, including diversity and inclusion training, to eliminate disparities based on race, place, or identity across key indicators of success, including health, education, criminal justice, the environment, employment, and the economy.
- (5) This Board believes City departments should collect data, disaggregated by race, on department staffing, procurement, contracting, and that the departments should present the data annually in the form of a report to the Board and make this data publicly available via the City’s website, with the intention of incorporating racial equity into the analysis of governmental action and strengthening the City’s commitment to analyze and address racial disparities.
- (6) This Board desires that the City continue to work to build alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and to encourage other local, state, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF FREDERICK, That the City shall:

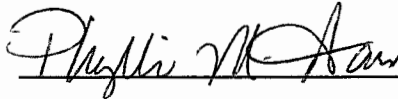
- (1) Establish a racial equity and social justice action plan or equity office to incorporate and embed racial equity and social justice principles and strategies into operations, programs, service policies, and community engagement – for the City and for each department;
- (2) Encourage the Mayor to consider racial equity initiatives and social justice impact programs in the strategic planning and budget processes;

¹⁰ Galea, Sandro. *Crying “Crisis”. Dean’s Note. Boston University School of Public Health.* <https://www.bu.edu.sph/2017/04/23/crying-crisis/>. Accessed 4.13.2018.

- (3) Establish a Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee and set forth the composition and duties of the Committee; and
- (4) Recommend the Planning Commission and the Board of Aldermen incorporate racial equity and social justice impact when preparing and adopting the Comprehensive Plan.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED THIS 16TH DAY OF JULY, 2020.

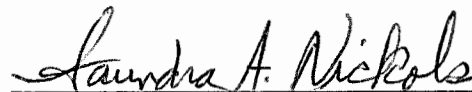
WITNESS





Michael C. O'Connor, Mayor

APPROVED FOR LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:



City Attorney