

RESOLUTION DECLARING RACISM A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions, including (1) individual racism that is interpersonal, and (2) systemic racism that is institutional or structural and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks; and

WHEREAS, race is a social construct with no biological basis; and

WHEREAS, racism unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and

WHEREAS, racism is a root cause of poverty and constricts economic mobility; and

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life, including housing, education, employment, and criminal justice, and is itself a social determinant of health; and

WHEREAS, racism and segregation have exacerbated a health divide resulting in people of color in Connecticut bearing a disproportionate burden of illness and mortality including COVID-19 infection and death, heart disease, diabetes, and infant mortality; and

WHEREAS, Black, Native American, Asian and Latino residents are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of inequities in economic stability, education, physical environment, food, and access to health care and these inequities are, themselves, a result of racism; and

WHEREAS, many studies have linked racism to worse health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the collective prosperity and wellbeing of the Town of West Hartford depends upon equitable access to opportunity for every resident regardless of the color of their skin.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD THAT:

1. Racism is a public health crisis affecting all of the United States, including Connecticut.
2. The Town shall work to progress as an equity and justice-oriented organization, by continuing to identify specific activities to enhance diversity and to ensure antiracism principles across our leadership, staffing and contracting.
3. The Town shall promote equity through all policies and enhance educational efforts aimed at understanding, addressing and dismantling racism and how it affects the delivery of human and social services, economic development and public safety.

4. The Town shall improve the quality of the data it collects and the analysis of that data — it is not enough to assume that an initiative is producing its intended outcome, qualitative and quantitative data should be used to assess inequities in impact and continuously improve.
5. The Town shall continue to advocate locally for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and support local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism.
6. The Town shall work to solidify alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state, regional, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.
7. The Town shall use community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage actively and authentically with communities of color wherever they live.
8. The Town shall clear goals and objectives to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity.

(Cantor, Davidoff, Blanks, Kerrigan, Sweeney, Wenograd)
June 23, 2020