



Resolution 01-2020

A resolution by the Board of Health of the Massillon City Health Department declaring that racism is a public health crisis and outlining actions be taken to address the crisis.¹

WHEREAS, Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities;

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 prevent problems from happening or recurring through implementing educational programs, recommending policies, administering services, limiting health disparities, and promoting health care equity, quality, and accessibility²;

WHEREAS, racism and segregation in Ohio has exacerbated a health divide resulting in black Ohioans having lower life expectancies than white Ohioans. According to the Health Policy Institute of Ohio, African Americans are far more likely than other races to die prematurely and to die of heart disease or stroke. African Americans 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 COVID-19^{3 4};

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 systems⁵;

WHEREAS, institutional racism is a social construct with no biologic basis;

WHEREAS, institutional racism is a manifestation of violence, inequities, and injustices that precipitate discriminatory influences 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 health and wellbeing;

¹ The Board wishes to acknowledge the Franklin County Board of Health for their inspiration in drafting this resolution. Their statement “Racism is a Public Health Crisis” [May 12, 2020] was the template for this resolution.

² <https://www.cdcfoundation.org/what-public-health>

³ Health Policy Institute of Ohio, 2017 Health Value Dashboard ([Health equity profiles](#)).

⁴ <https://www.policymattersohio.org/research-policy/sustainable-communities/health-health-equity/building-a-healthy-ohio>

⁵ Id.

WHEREAS, more than 100 studies have linked racism to worse health outcomes⁶;

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association (APHA) launched a National Campaign against Racism⁷; and the Canadian Public Health Association recognizes racism’s contribution to disparate health outcomes⁸;

WHEREAS, with support of the Massillon City Board of Health, Massillon City Health Department has adopted in its 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, one goal of “Equity” as the foundation for conducting the daily work of the agency, and adopted a Health Equity Policy and has adopted equal opportunity in employment policies and recruitment policies;

WHEREAS, Massillon City Health Department acknowledges that the health impact of racism in Ohio and the City of Massillon 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”.⁹

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Massillon City Health Department will:

1. Assert that racism is a public health crisis negatively affecting our entire community and that moving forward our citizens will touch, feel, and see real change.
2. Conduct an assessment of internal policy and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of Massillon City Health Department, supported by the Massillon City Board of Health in collaboration with Massillon City Health Department leadership staff and the Health Improvement and Equity Committee;
3. Establish a glossary of terms and definitions concerning racism and racial health equity for use by the department and the community;
4. Work to create an equity and justice-oriented organization with the Board of Health and leadership staff by identifying specific activities to embrace diversity and to incorporate antiracism principles across the organization;
5. Systematically review programs administered by Massillon City Health Department through a public health and race equity lens to assure that the programs are providing services free from discrimination and institutional bias.
6. Incorporate into the organizational Workforce Development Plan educational efforts to understand, address, and dismantle persistent and systemic racism in order to undo its effects on individual and population health and provide tools to assist staff and contractors on how to engage actively and authentically with communities of color;
7. Advocate for policies that improve health in communities of color, and support local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism;

⁶ Institute of Medicine. Unequal Treatment. <https://www.nap.edu/read/10260/chapter/2#7>. June 8, 2020.

⁷ American Public Health Association. Racism and Health. Available at: <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>. Accessed June 8, 2020.

⁸ www.cpha.ca/racism-and-public-health . Accessed June 8, 2020

⁹ Galea, Sandro. Crying “Crisis”. Dean’s Note. Boston University School of Public Health. <https://www.bu.edu/sph/2017/04/23/crying-crisis/>. Accessed June 8, 2020

8. Work to build 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;
9. Promote community engagement, actively engage citizens on issues of racism, and provide tools to engage authentically with communities of color;
10. Commit to review all portions of the Massillon City health policies through a public health and race equity lens.
11. Commit to conduct all human resources, vendor selection and grant management activities with a race equity lens including reviewing all internal policies and practices such as hiring, promotions, leadership appointments and funding;
12. Promote racially equitable economic and workforce development practices;
13. Promote and support policies and legislation that prioritize the health of all people, especially people of color, by mitigating exposure to adverse childhood experiences including trauma and ensuring implementation of health and equity in all policies¹⁰;
14. Promote and support policies to ensure that Health Improvement and Equity Committee members participate in trauma informed family engagement certification training.
15. Train all Massillon City Board of Health members, staff and grantees on workplace biases, race, injustices, discrimination and how prevent, mitigate, and report such actions;
16. Partner and build alliances with local organizations that have a legacy and track record of confronting racism;
17. 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 into their own statements;
18. Identify clear goals and objectives, including specific benchmarks, to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity; and
19. Establish alliances and secure adequate resources to successfully accomplish the above activities.

ADOPTED by the Massillon City Board of Health of the Massillon City Health Department this July 21, 2020.

APPROVED



President, Massillon City Board of Health

ATTEST

Secretary, Massillon City Health Department



¹⁰ Health in All Policies. Part of the National Prevention Strategy to help guide the nation into the most effective and achievable means for improving health, well-being, and health equity. [<https://www.cdc.gov/policy/hiap/index.html>]