

Resolution No. 20-10

WHEREAS, Columbus Public Health is committed to protect the health and improve the lives of all our residents and holds equity and fairness as core values; and

WHEREAS, the foundations of racism were laid concurrently with the beginnings of the nation in 1619, when race-based chattel slavery was introduced to the first European settlements in North America – an evil institution that would endure 246 years, until the end of the Civil War in 1865; and

WHEREAS, Jim Crow laws would replace the institution of slavery in the United States for the next 100 years as the legal jurisprudence of the nation, providing an enduring legal framework to justify state-sanctioned racism and discrimination against non-whites, in particular the descendants of African slaves; and

WHEREAS, communities around the United States have had 54 years to address the aforementioned 346-year legacy of race-based laws and discrimination; and

WHEREAS, on February 13, 2020, Mayor Andrew J. Ginther proclaimed racism a public health issue at the State of the City address, and charged the Health Commissioner and Columbus Public Health with drafting policies and issuing recommendations to improve the general health and well-being of Columbus; and

WHEREAS, the Health Commissioner created the Center for Public Health Innovation in April of 2020 to respond to the Mayor's call of racism being a public health issue and draft recommendations to increase life expectancy and raise the quality of life for Columbus' minority communities; and

WHEREAS, race is a social and political construct that has no biological basis; and

WHEREAS, racism takes on multiple forms: individual racism, whereby an individual pre-judges or discriminates against another; institutional racism, where policies, practices and procedures are established that serve one population better than another, even if unintentional; and structural racism, which is the history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combine to create a society that negatively impacts specific communities; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the disparities that have existed for 400 years – discriminatory practices that have negatively impacted the economic stability, physical environments, education, food stability and access, health care access and social cohesion of African Americans, which lead to excess mortality, morbidity, reduced life expectancy, diminished health statuses, and functional limitations to inhibit minority communities from realizing their full potential; and

WHEREAS, the current pandemic has been one of the first instances where a fraction of the day-to-day realities of minorities have become the day-to-day reality of the country's majority population around economic and health issues, creating a new awareness; and

WHEREAS, Columbus Public Health has a responsibility to address racism as it impacts the health of a large proportion of population; and

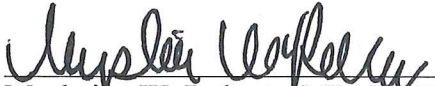
WHEREAS, racial equity will exist when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and the outcomes for all groups are improved.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT BE RESOLVED:

The Columbus Board of Health and Columbus Public Health will:

1. Dedicate the time and talents of the staff of the Center for Public Health Innovation to lead the collective response of the Department in addressing racism as a public health crisis.
2. Use a racial equity lens when changing or developing policies, programs and practices. This will be done by using a racial equity impact assessment to ensure racial equity is explicitly addressed in decision-making.
3. Advocate for policies that improve health in communities of color because those policies that improve health for communities of color will also improve the health of the entire community.
4. Continue its work to normalize conversations about race and equity and operationalize new behaviors and policies to achieve racial equity.
5. Continue to build staff and organizational capacity and skills through training and build infrastructure to support the work.
6. Continue to be data driven and be accountable for the health of the community by creating clear goals and objectives on the path to a healthier Columbus for all residents, regardless of color.
7. Partner with communities and other institutions to achieve meaningful results to address the effects of interpersonal, institutional and structural racism.

ADOPTED: June 1, 2020


Mysheika W. Roberts, MD, MPH
Secretary


Karen J. Morrison, JD, MS
President Pro Tempore