

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-179

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE DECLARING RACISM AND INEQUITY AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

WHEREAS, the County is dedicated to improving health and wellness, eliminating health disparities and achieving health equity for all residents; and

WHEREAS, the County is deeply saddened by the tragic deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks and countless Black Americans and other people of color who have been the victims of racially motivated violence; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, transportation, and criminal justice and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health and a significant barrier to achieving health equity; and

WHEREAS, communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of the social determinants of health, such as increased exposure to lead, poor air quality, lack of safe places to walk, bike or run, and unequal access to safe, stable housing; and

WHEREAS, living with the threat of discrimination and violence creates toxic stress for communities of color and that continued exposure to threatening situations can have lasting negative effects on health, development, well-being and opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. National Institutes of Health reports that multiple studies suggest that experiences of racism or discrimination raise the risk of emotional and physical health problems, including depression, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and even death; and

WHEREAS, racism can manifest in different ways ranging from violent attacks, to implicit bias, to differential access to resources and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, racism operates on systemic, institutional, and interpersonal levels, all of which resonate throughout time and across generations;

WHEREAS, racism has resulted in the development of systems and institutions, including those within government, that perpetuate inequities through policies and practices, and

WHEREAS, systemic racism and the resulting inequities threaten the health and well-being of Black Americans and other communities of color; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Riverside that Riverside County, including all County departments and agencies, will:

- A) Assert that racism, with its resulting health inequities, is a public health crisis affecting our entire society; and
- B) Work to create an inclusive, well-informed governmental organization that is conscious of injustice and unfairness through robust trainings and continuing education to expand the understanding of how racial discrimination affects individuals and communities most impacted by inequities; and
- C) Actively seek to increase diversity across the County workforce and in leadership positions; and
- D) Review all policies, procedures and practices to ensure racial equity is a core element of Riverside County, and work to eliminate those policies and practices that facilitate discrimination and violence against specific populations; and
- E) Prioritize the investment of time and treasure in promoting equity to address social determinants of health; and
- F) Identify and implement solutions to eliminate systemic inequity in all external services provided by the County including, but not limited to, the following sectors: Health; Social Services; Housing; Homelessness and Workforce; Business and Community; Public Works; Land Use and Environment; Finance and Government; and Public Safety; and
- G) Enhance public education and messaging efforts to increase understanding and awareness around systemic inequity from a public health perspective, with special attention given to the experiences of communities of color; and
- H) Implement community-based alternatives to address harms and prevent trauma; and
- I) Advocate for relevant local, state, and federal policies that improve health and wellness in communities of color, and support local, state, and federal initiatives that advance racial equity, while also encouraging individual employee advocacy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board of Supervisors, through the County Executive Officer, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Assistant County Executive Officers, will work with the Department of Public Health, all County Departments and other community partners to assess and apply an equity lens to internal policies and practices, adopt preventive measures, support the creation of a Riverside County task force and develop initiatives and programs to fight systemic racism and implicit bias to further health, wellness and equity in all aspects of community life.