

RESOLUTION NO. 2020 - _____

A RESOLUTION relating to eliminating systemic racism and health inequities in Clark County.

WHEREAS, on June 16, 2020, the Clark County Council unanimously resolved to work to eliminate systemic racism and injustice in Clark County; and

WHEREAS, health inequities are created by adverse social, economic, and environmental conditions; and

WHEREAS, racism creates and perpetuates these inequities; and

WHEREAS, communities of color in Clark County have lower life expectancies, fewer educational opportunities, and higher levels of being uninsured than their white counterparts; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately impacting communities of color across the country, including Clark County; and

WHEREAS, these disparate outcomes persist even after adjusting for income, education and poverty; and the cumulative result of these systems and structures has contributed to an environment that is persistently unhealthy and unsafe for our communities of color and leaves our communities economically disadvantaged; and

WHEREAS, unfair and race-based inequities will continue unless we undertake the necessary work to correct the inequities that perpetuate racism, violence, poverty, and injustice.

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDERED AND RESOLVED BY THE CLARK COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH, STATE OF WASHINGTON, AS FOLLOWS:

The Clark County Board of Health declares racism is a public health crisis and charges the Clark County Department of Public Health to:

- Assess internal policies and procedures to address and reform structures and processes that contribute to race-based decisions and actions.
- Recommend policy changes and improvements to the Board of Health and Clark County Council in order to support this work.

- Pursue opportunities to improve and enhance this work in our community.
- Partner with community agencies and organizations to co-create solutions. To raise the opportunity for every person, regardless of race, to live a healthy and thriving life in Clark County, Washington.

ADOPTED THIS ___TH DAY OF _____, 2020.

Attest:

CLARK COUNTY COUNCIL
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Clerk to the Council

Eileen Quiring, Chair

Approved as to form only:
ANTHONY GOLIK
Prosecuting Attorney

Temple Lentz, Councilor

Emily Sheldrick
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Julie Olson, Councilor

John Blom, Councilor

Gary Medvigy, Councilor

July 23, 2020

Secretary John Wiesman
WA State Department of Health
101 Israel Rd SE
Tumwater, WA 98501

Clark County Board of Health
Public Service Center, 6th Floor
Vancouver, WA 98660

Secretary Wiesman and Clark County Board of Health,

Recently, City and County Councils in Clark County received a request from the SW WA League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), to identify and treat systemic racism as a public health crisis. This request has been made by similar organizations across Washington and the United States, as the COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on health disparities for people of color in our County, State, and Nation. Recent COVID-19 case count information from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention illustrates the increased risk for people of color. Hispanic or Latino persons have an infection rate approximately 4 times that of non-Hispanic white persons. Non-Hispanic black persons and Non-Hispanic American Indian persons have an infection rate approximately 5 times that of non-Hispanic white persons. These numbers are clear and dramatic. They also point to structural elements of our communities which have created the foundation for this crisis.

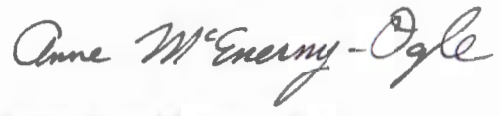
To best study the causes, impacts, and potential solutions for disparate health outcomes linked solely to race, the Mayors and Councils of our Cities are looking to our Public Health Officials who are best suited to lead acknowledgement and examination of these issues. Our Cities do not have Health Departments. We therefore lack the expertise and the authority to declare a "Public Health Crisis." That expertise resides in the Health Departments and Authorities of Washington State and Clark County.

Therefore, we are asking both the Clark County Board of Health and the WA State Secretary of Health to use your expertise and resources to acknowledge the crisis, identify the root causes, and suggest policy solutions in a collaborative fashion. Already in the State of Washington, the Boards of Health in King and Pierce Counties have formally acknowledged systemic racism as a public health crisis and started a focused examination of policies and practices which have increased health outcome disparities linked solely to race. We are asking that you examine this issue on behalf of our communities.

In the midst of this pandemic, our individual health depends more than ever on the health of our neighbors and whole community. But not every community has been impacted by this health crisis in the same way. The racial disparities in who is getting sick and who is able to recover make clear that work must be done to find public health solutions that raise the opportunity for every person, regardless of race, to be healthy.

Thank you for your help and your service to our communities during this crisis. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Mayor Anne McEnerney-Ogle
City of Vancouver, WA



Mayor Barry McDonnell
City of Camas, WA



Mayor Molly Coston
City of Washougal, WA



Greg Thornton
Mayor, City of La Center, WA



Mayor Don Stose
City of Ridgefield, WA





**SW WA League of United
Latin American Citizens Council 47013**
PO Box 820749 | Vancouver, WA 98662

07/02/2020

Clark County Council
Clark County Government
1300 Franklin St.
PO Box 5000
Vancouver, WA 98666-5000

Council Chair Quiring and County Council members,

The Southwest Washington League of United Latin American Citizens Council 47013 request that Clark County, Washington as well as the cities of Vancouver, Camas, Washougal, Battle Ground and Ridgefield formally declare Racism a Public Health Crisis.

Racism is a detriment to public health. On top of that, people of color are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In WA state Hispanics are 44% of confirmed cases while accounting for 13% of the population. Here in Clark County, Hispanics make up over 24% of confirmed cases and 10% of county population – a death rate of 7 times that of the white population, based on reporting by the Clark County Department of Health.

The roots of racism impacts the health of people of color in every aspect of their lives, including access to education, housing, and job opportunities. We are seeing this play out during the COVID-19 pandemic, with communities of color being infected with the virus at disproportionately high rates due to lack of access to adequate health services, including coronavirus testing and treatment. In addition, thousands of Clark County residents and families were not able to benefit from state or federal level financial assistance.

Experiencing systemic racism throughout a lifetime is a chronic stressor and negatively impacts physical, emotional and mental health, which ultimately impacts an entire society. Latin@s, Black, Indigenous, Asians and all People of Color are literally risking their lives simply because of skin tone, cultural history and way of speaking.

Recognizing how racism affects public health is an important first step to dealing with it. In order to begin alleviating healthcare disparities in Clark County, there must be an investment in public health and education that acknowledges, documents, and addresses the adverse health outcomes associated with systemic racial injustice. The authority for local health officers and boards are expanded in

The SW WA LULAC Council 47013 is a member of National LULAC. We are a 501(c)4 non profit organization supporting the civic health of the Latin and BIPOC communities of South West Washington

Federal Tax ID is EID# 45-2823779



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Latin American Citizens Council 47013**
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Washington Law chapter 70.05 RCW and allows for advancing funds and oversight needed in Clark County.

Addressing racism as a public crisis will help every single person in Clark County because it is about fighting oppression and hatred. By declaring racism as a public health crisis, we can begin to eliminate racism, which is at the root of so many horrific policies. Officially recognizing the role that race plays in public health is a crucial first step.

With this as the background we are asking Clark County and our SWWA cities to start treating systemic racism for what it is, a public health crisis. I look forward to your reply and the opportunity to dialogue about next steps.

In Solidarity,

Ed Hamilton Rosales

Ed Hamilton Rosales
President
SW WA LULAC Council 47013

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Racism as a public health crisis

Created: October 17

OVERVIEW

- Adverse social, economic, and environmental conditions create health inequities.
 - Racism creates and perpetuates health inequities.
- Examples:
 - Lower wages, including lower wages for similar work
 - Not preferred or selected for jobs
 - Family separation because of male incarceration rates
 - Denial of small business and mortgage loans
 - Restrictions on purchasing homes
 - Education systems linked to property taxes, resulting in reduced resources for children of color, lower graduation rates and less attainment of higher education
 - Access to healthcare
- Racism is an ongoing public health crisis and we need to address it now through new and improved policies, community engagement, improved and affordable access to healthcare, physical activity and healthy eating, in order to reduce the health disparities we see in communities of color.
- Communities of color in Clark County have lower life expectancies, lower levels of education and higher levels of uninsured than their white counterparts.
 - Children of color are also bullied at higher rates than those of white students.
- COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting communities of color all across the country, including in Clark County.
 - Hispanic/Latinx community makes up 10.0 percent of the Clark County population and represents 33.9 percent of confirmed cases with available ethnicity data (641 cases, 87 percent).
 - Firestone outbreak demonstrated inequities: essential workers/working conditions, uninsured/limited access to health care

CLARK COUNTY DATA

- Life expectancy in Clark County is lower for men of color than white men – as much as 15 years less for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander men (62.9 years, white: 78.1 years)
 - Life expectancy is also lower among Black men (73.4 years) and American Indian/Alaska Native men (75.2 years).
- Disparities in life expectancy exist among women as well. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander women have a life expectancy 7 years less than white women (75.0 years, white: 82.1 years).
 - Life expectancy is also lower among American Indian/Alaska Native women (76.8 years).
 - Life expectancy of Black women (82.0 years) is similar to that of white women (82.1 years).
- Uninsured rates are significantly higher among some communities of color, when compared to rates for white Clark County residents.
 - The percentage of Hispanic residents who are uninsured is more than three times that of white residents. (white: 4.9, Hispanic: 17.8).
 - The disparity is even greater among Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, which have a rate five times that of white uninsured rates (25.0, white: 4.9).
 - Those identified as “some other race” have an uninsured rate of 26.1; Black uninsured rate is 7.4.
- The percentage of Clark County residents with a bachelor’s degree in Clark County is significantly lower among some communities of color, when compared to rates for white Clark County residents.
 - About 30 percent of white residents have a bachelor’s degree. The percentage among Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders is less than half that (13.7 percent) and is just over half that for Hispanic residents (16.8 percent).
 - Rates are also lower among Black residents (25.6 percent) and American Indian/Alaska Native residents (24.5 percent).



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- Clark County children of color are bullied at school about race/ethnicity at significantly higher rates than that of white students.
 - 25 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native 10th-graders, 19.7 percent of black 10th-graders and 19.4 percent of Asian 10th-graders report bullying. That's compared to just 6.7 percent of white 10th-graders.
 - Rate of bullying is also higher among Hispanic/Latinx students (14.1 percent) and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students (17.2 percent).
- COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting communities of color in Clark County, most notably the Hispanic community.
 - Hispanic/Latinx community makes up 10.0 percent of the Clark County population, and represents 33.9 percent of confirmed cases with available ethnicity data (641 cases, 87 percent).
 - Black/African American community makes up 1.6 percent of the Clark County population and represents 3.2 percent of confirmed cases with available race data (534 cases, 72 percent). Please note that the number of cases in this population is small (n=17).
 - Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander makes up 1.0 percent of the Clark County population and represents 2.4 percent of confirmed cases with available race data (534 cases, 72 percent). Please note that the number of cases in this population is small (n=13).
- In Clark County, we see a disproportionate number of BIPOC families experiencing poverty when compared to the population. According to data from Census.gov (<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Income%20and%20Poverty&g=0500000US53011&y=2019&tid=ACSST1Y2019.S1701&hidePreview=false>), in 2019, there were 483,997 people in Clark County. 407,777 identified as white (84.3%) and 10,233 as Black or African American (2.5%). When we look at the number of people living under the poverty line, only 8.4% of people identifying as white had incomes under the poverty level, while 12.2% of people identifying as Black or African American had incomes that low.

RACISM AND HEALTH

- Racism is an ongoing public health crisis and we need to address it now through new and improved policies, community engagement, improved and affordable access to healthcare, physical activity and healthy eating, in order to reduce the health disparities we see in communities of color.
 - We can address communities of color having safer streets where they live, safer parks in their neighborhood, and better access to affordable, healthy food.
- Racism structures opportunity and assigns value based on how a person looks. The result: conditions that unfairly advantage some and unfairly disadvantage others.
 - Racism hurts the health of our nation by preventing some people the opportunity to attain their highest level of health.
- Racism may be intentional or unintentional. It operates at various levels in society.
- Racism is a driving force of the social determinants of health (like housing, education, transportation access and employment) and is a barrier to health equity.
 - For example, communities of color do not have the same access or level of service as it relates to public transportation.
- To achieve health equity, we need to address the injustices caused by racism by supporting actions at all levels, including policies and programs, to ensure equal opportunity for all.
- Racism causes bias in hiring practices, educational opportunities, employment, housing opportunities and in interactions and experiences with the medical community.



Racism as a public health crisis

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- Black women (37.1/100,000 live births) are nearly three times more likely to die of pregnancy-related complications than white women (14.7/100,00 live births).
- Black men are more than twice as likely to be killed by police as white men.
- The average life expectancy of Black Americans is approximately four years less than white people.
- A baby born to a Black American mother is more than two times more likely to die before his or her first birthday than a baby born to a white mom.
- 8% of non-elderly white people are uninsured, while among non-elderly Black Americans the uninsured rate is 11%.
- Even after class and poverty are accounted for Black Americans still have worse health outcomes than white Americans; studies show that the health equity gap is even wider between wealthy Black Americans and their wealthy white counterparts.



Racism as a public health crisis

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Potential Impacts of BOH Resolution stating racism is a public health crisis:

Grants/funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funders are actively looking to support public health agencies that actively work to address the impact of racism on health. Having a resolution would articulate this commitment from the highest level of our county and would help with grant applications • Send a strong message to partners, making them more likely to partner with us and jointly apply for grants/funding, and thereby increase the likelihood of success • Help the Council to start taking into consideration when departments proposing any request for funding, the effect the proposal will, or will not have on BIPOC • Allocating more MH funding for intensive services and housing for POC and consider equity screening for services
Policy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorize the County leadership to start discussing and enforcing equity considerations in their decision making • Direct staff to work on developing policy recommendations to bring to the BOH that could reduce racial health disparities • Give the Clark County Public Health chronic disease prevention and health assessment and evaluation staff “permission” to call out racism as a threat to public health and more confidently move forward on addressing racism as a social determinant of health • Support and direct our staff to identify conditions and recommend policies that reduce the disparate impact of environmental conditions on communities of color • Following the BOOC resolution on institutional racism, the Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board adopted equity as a priority for the comprehensive plan, and the DD program will be including this in the work of the advisory board and program.
Staff recruitment, development and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct our department and the County to develop policies and processes that support equity and diversity in workforce recruitment and retention, including, but not limited to, identifying and removing bias in reviewing applications and in the interview process and by including equity/diversity language in our job postings • Help us to recruit a more diverse workforce, representative of CC and strengthen relationships with BIPOC community-based organizations • Partners serving communities of color would be more likely to support our recruitment efforts.
Professional and Organizational Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns our work with professional organizations such as the American Public Health Association, the Washington State Public Health Association and the Washington State Medical Association, the National Association of



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	<p>County and City Health Officials, the National Association of Counties and the Washington State Hospital Association</p>
<p>Service Delivery/Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validates and legitimizes all the efforts we are doing to see and correct disproportionality in the services we are providing related to Housing, Economic Opportunity, Homelessness, etc. These efforts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All our contracts calling on our service providers to provide targeted outreach and culturally competent services to underserved and historically oppressed communities. ○ Prioritizing underserved communities in areas where we have measurable inequities ○ Allow and empower DCS (and Public Health) to institute certain criteria and screening to better serve minority communities that haven't been the focus point • Clark County Teen Talk peer support https://ccteentalk.clark.wa.gov/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Youth responded to a public concern using the words necessary and not skirt around racism. BOH leadership would support a community conversation where youth voice does not have to be edited (this is especially essential given the increased bullying experienced by students of color). • The BOCC resolution on institutional racism led to several initiatives in the Developmental Disabilities program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Family Training Series has been updated to include translation of materials and improved interpretation providing better access for families that do not have English as their first language. ○ The DD program used an excerpt from the resolution at the Disability Employment Awareness Month event next week. The resolution has broad applicability and intersectionality when thinking about the BOCC's commitment to create inclusion for historically underrepresented populations.
<p>Building Trust with Communities of Color</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clark County would show our local BIPOC communities that we are taking the impacts of racism seriously and that we want to see change happening on many levels. This could lead to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishing partnerships and developing contracts with community-based and culturally specific community-based organizations serving BIPOC constituents ○ Improved communicable disease control based on increased trust in case investigation, contact tracing, immunization, prophylaxis and treatment recommendations with communities of color ○ By having programs designed to be culturally specific, BIPOC communities are much more likely to be engaged, have better understanding of the expectations, set specific attainable goals and ultimately be successful. We can't get there without the right people at the table to have the conversations and we can't get the right people at the table until we build trust



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Example: Eviction Rent Assistance Program*
Contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase awareness of contract language clarity and how contract requirements may create barriers for small and minority-owned or run organizations

*Eviction Rent Assistance Program where Commerce required that 5% of the allocation had to be used working with By and For Organizations, defined as organizations who are, “operated by and for the community they serve. Their primary mission and history is serving a specific community and they are culturally based, directed, and substantially controlled by individuals from the population they serve. At the core of their programs, the organizations embody the community’s central cultural values.” Clark County Community Services used this opportunity to work with existing culturally specific partners and create new partnerships. Because of this work, the By and For Organizations were able to reach out to their communities and inform them of the opportunity of rent assistance. Since the beginning of this program on August 24, 433 households have received assistance with over 50% identifying as BIPOC. Of the total households served, over 20% are Black or African American. By bringing the right people to the table, we were able to expand outreach efforts through trusted local BIPOC organizations.