

DURHAM BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Resolution

RACISM: A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

- WHEREAS,** the American Association of Pediatrics calls racism a socially transmitted disease passed down through generations, leading to the inequities observed in our population today; and
- WHEREAS,** racism unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities of color, while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and white communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources, Durham County’s collective prosperity depends upon the equitable access to opportunity for every resident regardless of the color of their skin; and
- WHEREAS,** historically, white supremacy in the socioeconomic context refers to a system in which white people enjoy a structural advantage (privilege) over other ethnic groups, on both a collective and individual level; and
- WHEREAS,** racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism that is internalized or interpersonal; 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,** racism causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in 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
- WHEREAS,** overt racism and discrimination lead to worse health outcomes for people of color that can result in traumatic stress and linked to negative mental health outcomes, such as depression, anger, physical reactions, avoidance, intrusion, hypervigilance, and low self-esteem; and
- WHEREAS,** microaggressions defined as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative ... slights and insults.” Microaggressions have been found to increase suicide ideation; and
- WHEREAS,** the American Public Health Association has declared police violence a public health problem; negative police encounters among African American men are associated with depression; pregnant African American women experience stress related to the likelihood that their children will have future negative encounters with police, and that stress from negative youth-police encounters is associated with depression; and
- WHEREAS,** the greatest disparity in birth weight is seen among Black or African American newborns in Durham. These serve as examples of disparities - Non-Hispanic White 5.4% Non-Hispanic Black 13.5%, Hispanic 7.4%, and Infant Deaths Non-Hispanic White 630 Non-Hispanic Black 850, Hispanic 313; and
- WHEREAS,** diabetes affects minorities and low-income populations disproportionately. Race is a factor: as of 2015, 10.9% of white Durham residents had diabetes compared to 20.2% of black residents; and
- WHEREAS,** 11.2% of Non-Hispanic Black or African American women have a history of cardiovascular disease compared to 8.5% of Non-Hispanic White women; and
- WHEREAS,** the Durham County Board of Commissioners stands with the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People and residents of Durham County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the members of the Durham County Board of Commissioners:

1. Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire county
2. Work to progress as an equity and justice-oriented organization, with the Board of Commissioners and its staff leadership continuing to identify specific activities to further enhance diversity and to ensure antiracism principles across Board of Commissioners leadership, staffing and contracting.
3. Promote equity through all policies approved by the Board of Commissioners 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
4. Support community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage actively and authentically with communities of color wherever they live.
5. To always promote and support policies that prioritize the health of all people, especially people of color by mitigating exposure to adverse childhood experiences.
6. Ensure on-going antiracism, racial equity training with the goal of reaching all members of the Board of County Commissioners, county leadership and staff.
7. Encourage current racial equity training among all community partners, grantees, vendors and contractors.

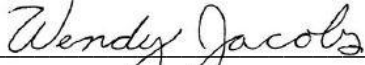


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8. Identify clear goals and objectives, including periodic reports to the Board of Commissioners, to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity.

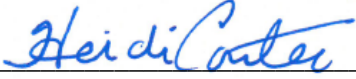
This the 8th day of June 2020.




Wendy Jacobs, Chair



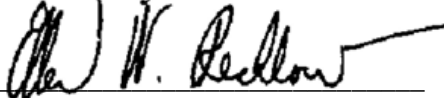
James Hill, Jr., Vice-Chair



Heidi Carter, Commissioner



Brenda A. Howerton, Commissioner



Ellen Reckhow, Commissioner

