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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**  
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**BOARD OF HEALTH**

**RESOLUTION TO DECLARE RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS  
IN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, IL**

**RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, race is a social construction with no biologic basis; and

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions, including individual racism, which is internalized or interpersonal; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism, which is institutional or structural, is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks or where one comes from; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and depletes the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and

WHEREAS, racism is rooted in the foundation of America. From the colonial take over of Native American lands, extermination of native villages, and prohibitions against practicing Native cultures. From the time chattel slavery began, to the Jim Crow era, declaration of the war on drugs that eventually led to the mass incarceration of Black people, racism has remained a presence in American society while subjecting Black people to hardships and disadvantages in every aspect of life. From the exclusion and marginalization of immigrants from equitable access to resources and the curtailment of their human rights; and

WHEREAS, racism, including unconscious and conscious bias, causes persistent racial discrimination in Criminal Justice, Social Capital, Voter Suppression, Education, Transportation, Employment, Food Access, Mental Health and Health Behaviors, Socioeconomic Status, Environmental Exposure, Access to Health Services, Housing, and Public Safety; and

WHEREAS, historical racism in Illinois has impacted Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Illinoisans including BIPOC Champaign County residents. For example, discriminatory housing practices in the 20th century, known as redlining, and discriminatory housing covenants contributed to the segregation of BIPOC communities in the cities, towns and villages of the County. BIPOC citizens in Champaign County have been limited to areas with restricted access to healthy foods and a disproportionate amount of convenience and liquor stores. They have also been historically restricted to areas with less essential resources, such as safe and affordable housing, sidewalks, street lights, and parks, leading to a variety of other health issues, including reduced life expectancy, higher rates of infant and maternal mortality, and higher rates of lead poisoning; and

WHEREAS, racism has existed in America since its origins. We are again seeing an increased incidence of police brutality, the result of racism, and the disproportionate impact on BIPOC people during the COVID-19 pandemic. BIPOC people are dying in larger-than-expected, record numbers from both; and

WHEREAS, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, BIPOC residents have higher incidence of chronic illnesses than other races causing increased morbidity and mortality, and

WHEREAS, there is clear data to illustrate that racism negatively impacts the lives of BIPOC people in Champaign County. The current COVID-19 crisis and ongoing protests against police brutality have helped to highlight now, more than ever, that racism, not race, causes disparities for BIPOC residents; and

WHEREAS, the privileges that other Americans experience inhibit them from fully understanding how racism impacts BIPOC people in America - for example the performance of simple tasks like driving while Black, walking/running in neighborhoods, wearing a hoodie, turban, or head covering, going to the store, or just using parks and public spaces all come with certain risk not experienced by others. Concerned parents prepare their children at an early age by having “The Talk” with their children in order to attempt to protect them from racism; and

WHEREAS, prior to the recent police brutality incidents and COVID-19 pandemic, Champaign-Urbana Public Health District was already taking steps to promote health equity for all residents and strives at all times to improve its own processes for greater equity and inclusion; and

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association, National Association of County and City Health Officials, and the American Academy of Pediatrics have declared racism as a public health crisis. The disparities caused by racism that we have outlined in this resolution represent a public health crisis which affects us all; and

WHEREAS, we as a governmental bodies have a responsibility to ensure an optimal quality of life for all of our BIPOC Champaign County residents.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Health of The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District hereby declares racism as a public health crisis in the County of Champaign, IL that affects all members of our society on a local (urban and rural), state, and national level and demands action from all levels of government and society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Champaign-Urbana Public Health District will establish an Equity Council made up of employees, who will be compensated for their specialized knowledge, that will assess internal policies and procedures to ensure equity is a core element in all organizational practices.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Health of the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District advocates for relevant policies that improve health in the BIPOC community, and support local, state, and federal initiatives that advance social justice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Champaign County will assess our current and proposed laws (ordinances and health regulations) and our policies, as well as their implementation, to promote health for BIPOC individuals within Champaign County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Health of the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District urges other governmental bodies to declare racism as a public health crisis and to immediately take steps to intentionally address and support methods that will strategically reduce the long-term impact of systemic racism.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Health of the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District requests that the County Clerk forward copies of this resolution to the Governor of the State of Illinois, Champaign County's State Legislative delegation, the Illinois Association of Counties and local units of government within Champaign County.

The Board of Health of the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District recognize the work of Ingham County Michigan Board of Commissioners for creating the core of this document.