RESOLUTION NO. 20-68-037
AGENDA NO. 12.D.

RESOLUTION
ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Supervisor Kara Purviance
INITIATED BY

Board of Health
SUBMITTED BY

Marie-Noel Sandoval
DRAFTED BY

June 16, 2020
DATE DRAFTED

Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis

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

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism is internalized or interpersonal; and systemic racism is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks, that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing, education, employment and criminal justice; and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health; and

WHEREAS, more than 100 studies have linked racism to worse health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, in Wisconsin, the highest excess death rates exist for African American and Native Americans, at every stage in the life course, and our infant mortality rate for infants of non-Hispanic black women is the highest in the nation; and

WHEREAS, in Rock County, several health behaviors and outcomes are worse for African Americans including infant mortality, breastfeeding rates, premature death rates, and children living in poverty; and,

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association (APHA) launched a National Campaign Against Racism; and

WHEREAS, Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 states that, “Wisconsin must address persistent disparities in health outcomes, and the social, economic, educational and environmental inequities that contribute to them”; and

WHEREAS, public health’s responsibilities to address racism include reshaping our discourse and agenda so that we all actively engage in racial justice work; and

WHEREAS, while there is no epidemiologic definition of “crisis”, the health impact of racism clearly rises to the definition proposed by Galea: “The problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of largescale solutions”.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors duly assembled this ___ day of June, 2020 asserts that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors advocates for policies that improve health in communities of color, eliminate health and opportunity gaps along racial lines, and increase the success of all groups by distributing resources justly across all communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors will support local, state, and federal initiatives that advance social justice.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors encourages individual advocacy to dismantle systemic racism and recognizes that every Rock County employee is responsible for creating and maintaining a culture in which employees respect the diverse values, beliefs, and behaviors in the workforce and the community they serve.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors works to build alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism, commits to engaging municipalities and institutions within the county to prioritize racial equity to address structural racism producing disparate population health outcomes, and encourages other local, state and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.
Respectfully submitted,

Board of Health

/s/Louis Peer   
Supervisor Louis Peer, Chair

/s/Dr. Connie Winter, DDS
Dr. Connie Winter, DDS, Vice Chair

/s/Dr. Kaitlyn Meyers, DVM, MPH
Dr. Kaitlyn Meyers, DVM, MPH

/s/Dr. Vijaya Somaraju, MD, MPH, FACP
Dr. Vijaya Somaraju, MD, MPH, FACP

/s/Eric Gresens, R.PH
Eric Gresens, R.PH

/s/Doug Wilde
Supervisor Doug Wilde

/s/Danette Rynes
Supervisor Danette Rynes

/s/Debra Kolste
Debra Kolste

/s/Shirley Williams
Supervisor Shirley Williams

FISCAL NOTE:

No fiscal impact.

/s/Sherry Oja

Sherry Oja
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

The County Board is authorized to take this action pursuant to §§ 59.01 and 59.51, Wis. Stats.

/s/ Richard Greenlee

Richard Greenlee
Corporation Counsel

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

Recommended.

/s/Josh Smith

Josh Smith
County Administrator
Executive Summary

This resolution acknowledges that racism causes persistent discrimination, is a social determinant of health and is linked to poor health outcomes. The public health community has a responsibility to acknowledge racism, advocate for equitable policies and inform the public discourse. In Rock County, disparities in health outcomes and behaviors for African Americans indicate ongoing racial discrimination. Differences in birth outcomes, death rates due to chronic conditions, and other economic factors are some of the most serious consequences of racism in our society. Therefore it is our responsibility to acknowledge this racism and to work to eliminate and reduce its impacts in Rock County.

References: