



OFFICE of the FIRST SELECTMAN

Proclamation

Racism is a Public Health Crisis

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism that is interpersonal and/or internalized or 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;

WHEREAS, race is a social construct with no biological basis;

WHEREAS, racism unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources;

WHEREAS, racism is a root cause of poverty and constricts economic mobility;

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life, including housing, education, employment, and criminal justice, and is itself a social determinant of health;

WHEREAS, racism and segregation have exacerbated a health divide resulting in people of color in Connecticut bearing a disproportionate burden of illness and mortality including COVID-19 infection and death, heart disease, diabetes, and infant mortality;

WHEREAS, Black, Native American, Asian and Latino residents are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of inequities in economic stability, education, physical environment, food, and access to health care and these inequities are, themselves, a result of racism;

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

WHEREAS, the collective prosperity and wellbeing of the Town of Colchester depends upon equitable access to opportunity for every resident regardless of the color of their skin:

NOW, THEREFORE, on behalf of the Town of Colchester, Connecticut, be it resolved, I do commit to-

- (1) Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our town and all of Connecticut;**
- (2) Work to progress as an equity and justice-oriented organization, by continuing to identify specific activities to enhance diversity and to ensure antiracism principles across our leadership, staffing and contracting;**
- (3) Promote equity through all policies approved by the Board of Selectmen 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 public safety;**
- (4) Improve the quality of the data our town collects and the analysis of that data—it is not enough to assume that an initiative is producing its intended outcome, qualitative and quantitative data should be used to assess inequities in impact and continuously improve;**
- (5) Continue to advocate locally for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and support local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism;**
- (6) Further work to solidify alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state, regional, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis;**
- (7) Support community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage actively and authentically with communities of color wherever they live; and**
- (8) Identify clear goals and objectives, including periodic reports to the Board of Selectmen, to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity.**

Dated this 16th day of July 2020.



**Mary Bylone
First Selectman**

