

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**IN THE MATTER OF CONCERN
REGARDING RACISM AS A
PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS**

RESOLUTION NO. _____

WHEREAS, throughout the history of the United States, racism has manifested itself as discrimination and oppression directed toward Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian American and Pacific Islanders, resulting in premature death and disability, health disparities, and racial and social inequities; and

WHEREAS, the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng, Delaina Yaun, Paul Andre Michels, Soon C. Park, Hyun J. Grant, Suncha Kim, Yong A. Yue, along with other recent attacks on Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian American and Pacific Islanders have revealed stark structural and systemic racial inequities and their impacts on the health and well-being of individuals and communities; and

WHEREAS, national, state, and local data collected during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian American and Pacific Islanders disproportionately bear the burden of disease in morbidity and mortality, and further reflect the stark structural and systemic racial inequities and their impacts on the health and well-being of individuals and communities; and

WHEREAS, racism is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of one's appearance, that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and ultimately stifles the equitable growth of society as a whole; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, transportation, and criminal justice; and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health and a significant barrier to achieving health equity; and

WHEREAS, racism can manifest in different ways ranging from violent attacks, to implicit bias, to differential access to resources and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, racism operates on systemic, institutional, and interpersonal levels, all of which resonate throughout time and across generations; and

WHEREAS, racism has resulted in the development of systems and institutions, including those within government, that perpetuate inequities through policies and practices; and

WHEREAS, racism is among the root causes of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color are disproportionately impacted by ACEs due to toxic stress, trauma, and lack of access to support and resources, which has a profound and lasting impact on children, adolescents, and their families; and

WHEREAS, the disproportionate justice-involvement of people of color in Santa Barbara County, especially Black and Latinx individuals, exacerbates barriers to employment, housing, education, and healthcare for communities of color; and

WHEREAS, the Average Daily Population of the Santa Barbara County Jail in 2018 was 58% Latinx, 32% White, 8% Black, and 2% “other,” while Santa Barbara County’s adult population was projected to be 41% Latinx, 49.3% White, 5.4% Asian American or Pacific Islander, 1.9% Black, 1.9% multiracial, and 0.5% American Indian; and

WHEREAS, on November 1, 2020, the population of youth supervised by the Probation Department was 88% Latinx, 6% White, 3% Black, and 3% “other,” while the County’s youth population was projected to be 59% Latinx, 32% White, 1% Black, and 7% “other”; and

WHEREAS, African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans are more likely to have unmet needs compared to other subgroups, with Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and multiracial groups showing the highest rate of inadequate mental health treatment; and

WHEREAS, Latinos and Asians born abroad have the highest rates of unmet mental health needs, and U.S. born Latinos and Asians have the highest rates of inadequate treatment; and

WHEREAS, multiple public health studies spanned across decades have shown Black women are up to four times more likely to die of pregnancy related complications than White women, Black and Indigenous men are more than twice as likely to be killed by police as White men, and life expectancies are 3-4 years shorter for Indigenous and Black Americans than for White Americans; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have linked racism to negative health outcomes, including research that the cumulative experience of racism throughout one’s lifetime can lead to chronic health conditions and disparities in physical and behavioral health consequences such as depression, anxiety, hypertension, stroke, heart attack, diabetes, maternal death, premature birth, respiratory diseases, and autoimmune diseases; and

WHEREAS, the County is dedicated to improving health and wellness, eliminating health disparities and achieving health equity for all residents; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department's mission is to improve the health of our communities by preventing disease, promoting wellness and health equity, while ensuring access to needed health care, and maintaining a safe and healthy environment; and

WHEREAS, Santa Barbara County Public Health Department statistics show that Guadalupe and Santa Maria cities have 90% and 80% minority populations respectively and have healthier community conditions than only 27% other California cities compared to South County cities that have less than 30% minority population and have healthier community conditions than over 75% of other California cities; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara County data shows that Black individuals residing in the County have a higher age-adjusted death rate at 844 per 100,000 than White individuals residing in the County at 618 per 100,000; and

WHEREAS, Black individuals have the highest age-adjusted death rate due to coronary heart disease by race/ethnicity in our county; and

WHEREAS, Census data indicates 56% of Latinx families live at or below the poverty line compared to less than 26% of White families; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has magnified disparities nationally and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that long-standing health and social inequities have resulted in increased risk of infection, severe illness, and death from COVID-19 among communities of color; and

WHEREAS, CDC national statistics show that Black people have a 2.6 times higher percentage of COVID-19 cases, a 4.7 times higher percentage of hospitalization, and a 2.1 times higher death rate compared to White, Non-Hispanic people. These rates are similarly elevated for Latinx and Indigenous people; and

WHEREAS, Santa Barbara County Public Health Department statistics show that while Hispanics/Latinos accounted for 48% of Santa Barbara County's population, they represented 57% of COVID-19 cases, 67% of COVID-19 hospitalizations, and 50% of COVID-19 deaths.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara hereby:

- Declares that racism and social inequities have created a public health crisis affecting Santa Barbara County and our entire country;
- Commits to becoming a more racial equity and justice-oriented organization in service to all communities in our county;
- Supports the Public Health Department's efforts to establish a county-wide working group of subject matter experts and community stakeholders to address the prevention of racism, and to develop equity, diversity, and inclusion as core components to the delivery of health and human services for underserved populations, including allocation of resources and personnel practices;
- Pledges to continue to: a) incorporate equity, inclusion, and diversity into organizational practices; b) offer educational trainings and activities aimed toward expanding employees' understanding of how racism affects individuals and their health; and c) provide tools to assist our employees in best serving our community in a culturally competent manner;
- Pledges to advocate for relevant policies that will improve health among all Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian American Pacific Islanders;
- Pledges to encourage other local, state, and federal entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors hereby pledges to support efforts to address racism as a public health crisis and efforts to improve public health disparities in our community.

Resolution of Concern Regarding Racism as a Public Health Crisis

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California 6th day of April, 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

BOB NELSON, CHAIR
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ATTEST:
MONA MIYASATO
CLERK OF THE BOARD

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
MICHAEL C. GHIZZONI
COUNTY COUNSEL