

Easton Resolution on Racism and Public Health

WHEREAS racism is a complex and pervasive problem that must be acknowledged and addressed by all communities;

WHEREAS, racism has 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, racism unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities;

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 health, housing, education, employment, and criminal justice;

WHEREAS an abundance of research studies have linked racism to disproportionately poor health outcomes in people of color;

WHEREAS racism and segregation have exacerbated a health divide in our state resulting in people of color in Connecticut bearing a disproportionate burden of illness and death in numerous areas including COVID-19, heart disease, diabetes, infant mortality, HIV/AIDS and more;

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, housing, food, and access to health care and these inequities are, themselves, a result of racism;

WHEREAS racism is a serious public health issue that has been made ever more apparent in the disparate impact of the COVID pandemic on people of color in Connecticut and across the country;

WHEREAS multiple towns across Connecticut have passed resolutions declaring racism a public health crisis in response to the heightened focus on racial inequity and injustice that is happening in our nation, state and local communities including Easton;

WHEREAS Easton is committed to strengthening public health protections, policies and services for its residents and the Town has entered a contractual agreement with the Westport-Weston Health District to enhance its public health program;

WHEREAS Easton is forming a new Diversity and Inclusion Task Force that will serve as a resource for Town departments, boards, and commissions to support policies and practices

that undermine systemic racism, promote equity and mitigate the effects of implicit bias within Easton;

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

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, that the Board of Selectmen of Easton acknowledge that racism is a growing public health concern affecting our town and all of Connecticut and will:

1. Work to identify and support specific activities to enhance diversity and to ensure antiracism principles across our leadership, staffing and contracting practices;
2. Promote racial and health equity in 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 health and social services, our educational system, economic development and public safety;
3. Strive to improve the quality of the data our town collects and the analysis of that data to assess the presence and impact of inequities in our community and continuously improve;
4. Advocate 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;
5. 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;
6. Support community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage with communities of color wherever they live; and
7. Assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN ON AUGUST 20,2020