

# Proclamation

## Racism is a Public Health Crisis

- WHEREAS** Cabarrus Health Alliance's mission is "Achieving the highest level of individual and community health through collaborative action";
- WHEREAS** local boards of health and county commissioners across the nation have declared racism a public health crisis;
- WHEREAS** Public Health is the science of protecting and improving the health of communities. Public health work is achieved by promoting healthy lifestyles, researching disease and injury prevention, and detecting, preventing and responding to infectious diseases;
- WHEREAS** public health professionals try to prevent problems from happening or reoccurring through implementation of educational programs and policies that address social determinants of health;
- WHEREAS** an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism itself is a social determinant of health. Racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism is internalized or interpersonal; 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. This unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities;
- WHEREAS** race is a social construct with no biologic basis;
- WHEREAS** racism influences many areas of life, including housing, education, employment, access to healthcare, health outcomes, criminal justice and is a persistent barrier to achieving health equity for all Cabarrus County residents;
- WHEREAS** racism in Cabarrus County has exacerbated health outcomes, as exemplified in numerous public health metrics;
- WHEREAS** Cabarrus Health Alliance is committed to implementing unbiased, evidence-informed policies, systems, and environmental change interventions to increase opportunities for a healthy life in Cabarrus County;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Cabarrus Health Alliance Board of Health requests Cabarrus Health Alliance to:

1. Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire community;
2. Proclaim Juneteenth (June 19th) as a paid holiday for Cabarrus Health Alliance (CHA) staff;
3. Conduct an assessment of internal policies and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of the public health system in Cabarrus County;
4. Incorporate into the organizational structure a plan for educational efforts to understand, address and dismantle racism, in order to undo how racism affects individuals and populations and provide tools to assist community partners on how to engage actively and authentically with communities of color;
5. Work to create an equity and justice-oriented organization, with the Board of Health and senior staff identifying specific activities to embrace diversity and to incorporate antiracism principles across CHA, leadership, staffing and contracting;
6. Commit to conducting all human resources, vendor selection and grant management activities with an equity lens including reviewing all internal policies and practices such as hiring, promotion, leadership appointments and funding;
7. Advocate for relevant policies that improve health of communities of color and support local, state and regional/national initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systematic racism;
8. Work to build alliance and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state, regional/national sectors to recognize racism as a public health crisis;
9. Collaborate with organizations working in the scope of diversity, equity and inclusion to train board members and staff;
10. Encourage community partners and stakeholders in the education, employment, housing criminal justice and safety areas to recognize racism as a public health crisis and to implement portions or all of this declaration;
11. Promote community engagement, actively engaging citizens on issues of racism and equity, and providing tools to engage actively and authentically with communities of color and other marginalized groups;
12. Identify clear goals and objectives, including specific benchmarks, to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity;
13. Establish alliances and secure adequate resources to successfully accomplish the above activities.

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**James T. Mack, Jr.**  
Board Chair

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**Lara J. Pons, MD**  
Board Vice-Chair

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**Bonnie Coyle, MD**  
Health Director



**CABARRUS  
HEALTH  
ALLIANCE**