



MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR BREANNA LUNGO-KOEHN

DECLARATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association (APHA) has declared that racism is an “ongoing public health crisis that needs our attention now;” and

WHEREAS, racism is defined as a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race¹; and

WHEREAS, the APHA has cited racism as a barrier to health equity and the distribution of the social determinants of health; and

WHEREAS, health equity is defined as all residents having the opportunity to attain their highest level of health; and

WHEREAS, social determinants of health, including but not limited to affordable housing, stable employment, quality schools, healthy food access, and access to health care, that are proven to impact individuals health, wellbeing and longevity, demonstrate significant disparities among racial and ethnic minorities within the United States; and

WHEREAS, the disparities among social determinants of health negatively impact racial and ethnic minorities due to barriers to housing, employment, health, economic, educational, and other opportunities as compared to White Americans; and

WHEREAS, these disparities are shown to contribute to more negative impacts to health of persons of color, including greater percentages of asthma, obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic diseases and serious health issues; and

WHEREAS, data shows that, due to the disparities in social determinants of health and resulting access to healthcare and other critical services, data shows that Black Americans have been more adversely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic as compared to White Americans, despite population data; and

¹ "racism." *Merriam-Webster.com*. 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com> (11 June 2020).



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WHEREAS, structural and systemic racism, and the resulting health disparities more adversely affect the physical, mental, and overall health of persons of color; and

WHEREAS, in order to be effective in instituting change, we must start within our local communities by addressing racism, a root cause, that contributes to disparities among social determinants of health and health disparities and all other critical barriers to equity; and

WHEREAS, the City of Medford is committed to creating and instituting changes in our policies and practices across our municipal departments and within our school system to address institutional racism and the impacts of racism on the social determinants of health; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn and the Medford Board of Health declare that racism is a public health crisis in the City of Medford, and that the City and its agencies will work to address the crisis through policy creation, system changes and amendments in partnership with the Medford community, specifically persons of color and other historically underserved individuals and communities within the City.

By this declaration, the City of Medford commits to the following:

1. Evaluate existing policies and create policies to address institutional racism.
2. Release reports on existing policies and work around health equity, policing, and vulnerable populations, including planned actions to address disparities in social determinants of health data.
3. Engage historically underserved and marginalized persons and groups to aid in policy creation and action steps, in the short and long term.
4. Recommit to and enhance the City's hiring policies to promote equity across staff, boards and commissions, and volunteers.

Signed:

Date: 6/15/20


Breanna Lungo-Koehn
Mayor, City of Medford