



Municipality of \_\_\_\_\_

## **PREAMBLE TO THE RESOLUTION DECLARING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS**

The death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have sparked a national movement to address the racial, social, and political issues that affect people of color. As a result of trauma inflicted by centuries of racism, communities of color experience unique barriers to health and worse health outcomes than white Americans. People of color live with disproportionately higher cortisol levels, higher rates of chronic stress, higher rates of chronic disease, and higher rates of COVID-19 infection and death<sup>1</sup>.

As public officials, it is the duty of local leaders to use their legal and moral authority to create a community where all members can attain their highest possible standard of health, regardless of race or color. Local leaders can address the negative impact of racism on health by reshaping political discourse to address racial justice and racial disparities. Making a public declaration that racism is a public health crisis is the first step in intentionally embedding health equity into policy making. The approval of this Resolution is one way to hold ourselves and our local governments accountable for addressing racism and moving towards health equity.

To address these racial health disparities and create true equity in New Jersey, individuals, organizations, and institutions must work collaboratively. A coordinated effort by local officials, community-based organizations, and residents – particularly of communities of color - will ensure that local policies effectively address the barriers to health that racial minorities face.

As a part of their mission to ensure residents' safety and ability to access health care, the Mayors Wellness Campaign is working to support towns in their efforts to address racial health inequities in New Jersey's towns. The Mayors Wellness Campaign will work with mayors and community leaders by providing evidence-based tools and strategies to end health disparities and examine the role of race as a social determinant of health.

The adoption of this Resolution will be the first step of many against the institution of racism and its negative effects on the overall health of New Jersey residents. Declaring racism to be a public health crisis offers a clear path to addressing these inequities, preventing future injustices, and mitigating existing ones.

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<sup>1</sup> Leng, C. B. (2020, July 17). *Town of Hamden: Declaration of Racism as a Public Health Crisis*. Retrieved from American Public Health Association: [https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/2655/07202020\\_Resolution-Declaring-Racism-as-a-Public-Health-Crisis-in-Hamden](https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/2655/07202020_Resolution-Declaring-Racism-as-a-Public-Health-Crisis-in-Hamden)



## MAYOR'S PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, New Jersey's racial minorities are less likely to have health insurance and more likely to suffer from many chronic diseases, including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cancer<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, an overarching goal for Healthy New Jersey 2020 is to "Achieve health equity, eliminate disparities, and improve health for all people."<sup>3</sup>

WHEREAS, racial health inequities are not due to genetic or biological differences between races, but due to entrenched racism in American society; and

WHEREAS, a growing body of literature shows that social determinants of health - the conditions in which an individual lives, learns, works, and plays - are key drivers of health inequities; and

WHEREAS, disparities among social determinants of health negatively impact minorities due to barriers in housing, employment, health, economic, educational, and other opportunities. These disparities contribute to poor physical and mental health of racial and ethnic minorities.

WHEREAS, in addition to having an independent influence on social determinants, racism in and of itself has broad reaching and direct negative impacts on individual health outcomes; 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 inequity; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that I, Mayor \_\_\_\_\_, affirm that racism is a public health crisis that results in physical and mental health disparities. Based upon this affirmation, [Municipality] will actively participate in dismantling racism by:

- Engaging with the Mayors Wellness Campaign to implement evidence-based policies and programming that address racial health inequities.
- Declaring racism and its public health manifestations to be a public health crisis.
- Engaging actively with historically marginalized communities in problem identification and policy creation.
- Building and strengthening partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encouraging other local, state, regional, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

*Signature of Mayor*

[Insert Official Seal]

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<sup>2</sup> New Jersey Department of Health. (2019, February 19). *Healthy New Jersey 2020 Indicator Report Index*. Retrieved July 13, 2020, from New Jersey State Health Assessment Data: <https://www-doh.state.nj.us/doh-shad/indicator/CatHNJ2020.html>

<sup>3</sup> Healthy New Jersey 2020. (2019, July 30). *Healthy New Jersey 2020*. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from State of New Jersey Department of Health: <https://www.state.nj.us/health/chs/hnj2020/about/intro/>



## Appendix: Examples of Mayoral Proclamations Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis

This appendix references mayoral proclamations that were adopted in cities and counties across the United States. These proclamations informed the creation of the Mayors Wellness Campaign Resolution declaring racism a public health crisis. The American Public Health Association<sup>4</sup> offers a more comprehensive list of all cities, counties, and states that have declared racism a public health crisis.

1. Akron, Ohio:  
<https://onlinedocs.akronohio.gov/OnBaseAgendaOnline/Documents/ViewDocument/Supporting%20Document%20for%20-%20RESOLUTION%20declaring%20racism%20as%20a%20public%20health%20crisi.pdf?meetingId=301&documentType=Agenda&itemId=16186&publishId=12407&isSection=false>
2. Framingham, Massachusetts:  
<https://www.framinghamma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/38352/Joint-Order-on-Racism-and-Public-Health>
3. Hamden, Connecticut:  
[https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/2655/07202020\\_Resolution-Declaring-Racism-as-a-Public-Health-Crisis-in-Hamden](https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/2655/07202020_Resolution-Declaring-Racism-as-a-Public-Health-Crisis-in-Hamden)
4. Leonia, New Jersey: <https://www.leonianj.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=1512>
5. Medford, Massachusetts: [http://www.medfordma.org/storage/2020/06/MedfordMA-Resolution\\_Racism-is-Public-Health-Crisis.pdf](http://www.medfordma.org/storage/2020/06/MedfordMA-Resolution_Racism-is-Public-Health-Crisis.pdf)
6. New Britain, Connecticut: [https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/627295/1.SUB\\_Resolution\\_Racism\\_Public\\_Health.pdf](https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/627295/1.SUB_Resolution_Racism_Public_Health.pdf)

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<sup>4</sup> American Public Health Association. (n.d.). *Declarations of Racism as a Public Health Crisis*. Retrieved from American Public Health Association: <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health/racism-declarations>