



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

Resolution

Proposed No. 20-08.2

Sponsors

1 A RESOLUTION declaring racism a public health crisis.

2 WHEREAS, racism has deep and harmful impacts that unfairly disadvantages
3 Black, Indigenous and People of Color ("BIPOC") and unfairly advantages people who
4 identify as white, and

5 WHEREAS, racism harms every person in our society and is the root cause of
6 poverty and economic inequality, and

7 WHEREAS, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," as King
8 County's namesake, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, and

9 WHEREAS, whether intended or not, racism becomes ingrained in institutional
10 policies and practices, creating differential access to opportunities and resources, and
11 causes disparate outcomes in all aspects of life affecting health, and

12 WHEREAS, by maintaining the status quo and existing systems of power and
13 privilege based on our country's long history of and continued persistence of white
14 supremacy, institutional policies and practices do not need to be explicitly racist in order
15 to have racist impacts on residents, and

16 WHEREAS, culture across institutions and systems is critical, and the legacy of
17 racist policies and practices continues to exist even once the policies and practices have
18 been changed, and

19 WHEREAS, reversing the legacy of institutional racism calls for an

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20 understanding of the intersectional nature of power and oppression that amplify adverse
21 effects on people who experience more than one form of marginalization, such as race,
22 gender and disability, and a commitment to anti-racist policies and practices, and

23 WHEREAS, decades of data collected by Public Health - Seattle & King County
24 have demonstrated how BIPOC communities are affected by both acute impacts, such as
25 gun violence, and chronic impacts such as higher rates of cardiovascular disease and
26 diabetes, maternal and infant mortality, underweight babies and shorter, less-healthy lives
27 overall, and

28 WHEREAS, King County residents of color have deep wells of resilience and
29 strength, and BIPOC communities are less likely to experience other health conditions,
30 such as suicide, Alzheimer’s disease and drug and alcohol-related conditions than their
31 white counterparts, and

32 WHEREAS, King County residents of color are more likely to experience
33 inequities in education, access to jobs, earning power, adequate and safe housing, higher
34 rates of policing and involvement in the criminal legal system, and overall quality of life,
35 and

36 WHEREAS, the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 on our BIPOC
37 communities is a present-day demonstration of the systemic racism in institutions and
38 systems that have not valued and supported human life equitably, and

39 WHEREAS, we recognize that historically and currently King County has been
40 complicit in maintaining and perpetuating structural racism, and that as an institution the
41 Board of Health must stand in support of dismantling oppressive systems grounded in
42 white supremacy, and

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43 WHEREAS, King County government and Public Health - Seattle & King County
44 have expressed a commitment to developing stronger and better resourced partnerships
45 with community organizations and leaders to disrupt and dismantle racism and protect the
46 health and well-being of our BIPOC residents, using quantitative data, including data
47 about racial inequities, along with voices and knowledge of community leaders and
48 residents to get to solutions that work and that are sustainable, and

49 WHEREAS, in 2008 the King County Executive joined with Public Health -
50 Seattle & King County to launch the Equity and Social Justice Initiative, and later in
51 2010 the King County Council passed equity and social justice ordinance, and now the
52 current Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan leads with racial justice, and

53 WHEREAS, across the country local governments have taken action to declare
54 racism a public health crisis including the cities of Boston, Cleveland and Columbus,
55 Ohio, Franklin County, Ohio, the Indianapolis City-County Council in Indiana, and the
56 Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health, and

57 WHEREAS, the Board of Health is committed to addressing racial equity and
58 health disparities in all forms and at all levels, which are the individual, institutional and
59 systemic levels, across the county;

60 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of King
61 County:

62 A. The Board declares racism a public health crisis;

63 B. The Board supports King County and Public Health - Seattle & King County
64 immediately in the work to advance a public health approach in addressing institutional
65 and systemic racism;

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66 C. The Board commits to assessing, revising, and writing its guiding documents
67 and its policies with a racial justice and equity lens including the Board of Health Code
68 and annual workplan; and

69 D. The Board members commit to ongoing work around race and equity such as
70 participating in racial equity training, engaging and being responsive to communities and
71 residents impacted by racism, especially Black and Indigenous communities, as partners
72 in identifying and implementing solutions, establishing an agreed upon understanding of

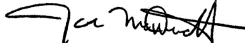
Resolution

73 racial equity principles to work towards antiracist policies and practices and to serve as
74 ambassadors of racial equity work.
75

Resolution 20-08 was introduced on and passed as amended by the Board of Health on 6/18/2020, by the following vote:


Yes: 13 - Dr. Daniell, Dr. Delecki, Ms. Honda, Ms. Kohl-Welles, Ms. Lambert, Mr. McDermott, Ms. Mosqueda, Mr. Lewis, Ms. Morales and Ms. Zahn
Excused: 1 - Mr. Baker

BOARD OF HEALTH
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

DocuSigned by:

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Joe McDermott, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

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Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Board

Attachments: None