Legislation Details

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On agenda:	6/27/2019			**Final action:**	7/25/2019
Title:	PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ITEM 19-4285				

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS DECLARING RACISM AND RACIAL INEQUALITIES A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IN COOK COUNTY

WHEREAS, Public Health Awareness raises awareness of the relationship between the health of individuals and the health of their communities; and

WHEREAS, African Americans comprise 1.3 million of Cook County's total population, the largest in any County, and Latin Americans comprise a comparable percentage of Cook County's population; and

WHEREAS, race is a social construction with no biological basis; and

WHEREAS, studies link racism to negative health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, areas falling under the public health category include healthy communities, violence prevention, rural health, technology, public health, climate change, and global health; and

WHEREAS, the promotion of healthy communities directly relates to the health of individuals, and encourages expanding public health support networks to decrease racial disparities in health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, communities of color are disproportionally impacted by social detriments to health, such as: increased exposure to lead; poor air quality; lack of safe places to walk, bike, run, live, and inadequate health education; and

WHEREAS, Cook County is the 2nd largest County in the United States, with health disparities among its racial populations, and

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions, including individual racism and systemic racism; and

WHEREAS, individual racism is internalized or interpersonal, which may manifest in microaggressions against others based on race; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism is an institutional or structural system based on structuring opportunity and assigning value through the social interpretation of one's race; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism unfairly disadvantages individuals, businesses, and communities while simultaneously depleting the strength of society through the wasteful use of human resources; and

WHEREAS, an emerging body of research demonstrates racism is a social detriment to health caused by racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, transportation, and criminal justice; and

WHEREAS, studies show African Americans have the highest death rate at every life stage; and

WHEREAS, Cook County's Department of Public Health's most recent data indicates the average infant mortality rate in Cook County is 6.6 infant deaths per 1000 live births. However, compared to their Hispanic and Non-Hispanic White counterparts, African American mothers experienced the highest rate, and double Cook County's average rate, of infant mortality at 13.6 infant deaths per 1000 live births; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the diabetes diagnoses rates for African Americans was 1.9 percent higher than non-minorities and Latinos diabetes diagnoses rates was 1.7 percent higher than non-minorities; and

WHEREAS, County Health Rankings (using 2018 data) places Cook County as the 52nd healthiest county in the State of Illinois out of 102 counties; and

WHEREAS, Cook County must address the persistent disparities in health outcomes and the social, economic, educational, and environmental inequities contributing to them; and

WHEREAS, Cook County will commit to achieving health equity; and

WHEREAS, while there is no epidemiologic definition of "crisis", the health impact of racism clearly rises to the definition proposed by Galea, "[t]he problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of large-scale solutions;" and

WHEREAS, the County will create the Office of Health and Social Equity within the Cook County Dept of Public Health to serve in an integral role in recognizing and aiding in the resolution of the County's racial inequities for the benefit of all of its citizenry, and for the county to achieve its full potential; and

WHEREAS, with support from community partners the Office of Health and Social Equity, it is the County's responsibility to address racism, including seeking solutions to reshape the discourse and actively engage all citizens in racial justice work; and

WHEREAS, the Health and Hospital Committee will recommend solutions to overcome racism.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Cook County will: Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire society; Assess internal policy and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of the County; led by the Cook County Board President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners (County Board), in collaboration with The Office of Health and Social Equity and other relevant parties;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County will work to create an inclusive organization identifying specific activities to: (1) increase diversity across its workforce and in leadership positions; (2) incorporate inclusion and equity into organizational practices; (3) work with Human Resources to offer educational trainings/activities to expand employees' understanding of how racism affects individuals; and (4) work with marginalized populations to provide tools to assist employees across Cook County to engage actively and authentically with communities of color, (5) Advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and (6) support local, State, and Federal initiatives that advance social justice, while encouraging individual employee, and advocate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County will encourage other local, State, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Board hereby supports the efforts to address public health disparities due to racial inequities throughout Cook County.

Sponsors: DENNIS DEER, ALMA E. ANAYA, SCOTT R. BRITTON, JOHN P. DALEY, BRIDGET DEGNEN, BRIDGET GAINER, BRANDON JOHNSON, BILL LOWRY, DONNA MILLER, STANLEY MOORE, KEVIN B. MORRISON, TONI PRECKWINKLE (President), PETER N. SILVESTRI, DEBORAH SIMS, LARRY SUFFREDIN, JEFFREY R. TOBOLSKI, LUIS ARROYO JR

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Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
7/25/2019	1	Board of Commissioners	approve as substituted	Pass
7/24/2019	2	Health & Hospitals Committee	recommend for approval as substituted	Pass
7/24/2019	1	Health & Hospitals Committee	accept as substituted	Pass
6/27/2019	1	Board of Commissioners	refer	Pass

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