

	RESOLUTION # _____	ITEM # _____ BOARD ACTION Adopted: _____ For: _____ Against: _____ Abstain: _____ Abs/Excd: _____ Vote Req: _____ Other Action: _____	HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE ACTION Adopted: _____ ✓ For: <u>3</u> _____ Against: _____ Abstain: _____ Abs/Excd: <u>1</u> _____
TO: HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE LA CROSSE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS			

RE: RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

WHEREAS, racism is a social construction with no biologic basis and that longstanding institutional and structural bias has resulted in racial inequities that affect individual and population health, social, economic, and educational outcomes; and

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism is internalized or interpersonal; and systematic racism is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on social interpretation of how one looks, that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and depletes the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing, education, employment and criminal justice; and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health; and

WHEREAS, the percentage of children living in poverty in La Crosse County by racial categories was 34% for Black children, 21%, for Hispanic children, 20% for Native American children, 10% for Asian children and 6% for White; and

WHEREAS, according to the most recent data in 2017, infants born at a low birth-weight (less than 2500 grams) in La Crosse County fell in the following categories: Black infants - 16.7%; Native-American infants - 14.3%; Hispanic-Latino infants - 9.4%; Asian infants - 4.6% and White infants - 6%; and

WHEREAS, according to the most recent data from 2015 to 2018, infant mortality rates in La Crosse County fell in the following categories of babies born to: Black mothers - 14.4%; Native American mothers 11.9%; Hmong/Laotian mothers- 6.3%; Hispanic mothers - 6.2%; and White mothers - 4.7%; and

WHEREAS, home ownership among the White community in La Crosse is 66.2% compared to 12.3% among the Black community and

WHEREAS, educational achievement including graduation rates for Black students has been considerably lower than the educational achievement and graduation of rates for White students; and

WHEREAS, Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 states that, "Wisconsin must address persistent disparities in health outcomes, and the social, economic, educational and environmental inequalities that contribute to them"; and

WHEREAS, La Crosse County has worked, and continues to work, to identify racial inequities and disparities across our organization and to develop and implement anti-racist and equity policies, practices and programs such as: La Crosse County Juvenile Justice - System of Care (2017), the

RE: RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (2019) and ongoing racial justice training for La Crosse County Employees; and

WHEREAS, public health’s responsibilities to address racism include reshaping our discourse and agenda so that we all actively engage in racial justice work; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the La Crosse County Board

1. Declares that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire society;
2. Will conduct an assessment of the internal policy and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of La Crosse County. This assessment will be led by human resources in collaboration with the La Crosse County Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and other relevant parties, to communicate the results of assessment, and determine an appropriate interval for reassessment;
3. Will work to create an equity and justice orientated organization, with the Board, committees and those who are most impacted, in identifying specific activities to increase diversity and to incorporate anti-racism principles across La Crosse County leadership, employees, staffing and contracting;
4. Will incorporate into the organizational workplan educational efforts to address and dismantle racism, expand employees’ understanding of racism, and how racism affects individual and population health, and provide tools to assist everyone to engage actively and authentically with communities of color;
5. Will advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and support local, state, and federal initiatives that advance social justice, while also encouraging individuals’ advocacy to dismantle systematic racism;
6. Will work to build alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.
7. Will allocate adequate financial and human resources to accomplish needed activities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the La Crosse County Board hereby supports the County’s efforts to address public health disparities due to racial inequities throughout the county.

FISCAL NOTE: No fiscal cost to La Crosse County.

Date: _____

Date: 4-13-21

COMMITTEE CHAIR

RECORDING CLERK

	Reviewed Only	Recommended	Not Recommended
Co. Admin.	<u>SO</u>	_____	_____
Fin. Director	_____	_____	_____
Corp. Counsel	<u>MA</u>	_____	_____
Board Chair	_____	_____	_____

Requested By: Rick Cornforth
Date Requested: March 23, 2021
Drafted By: Corporation Counsel

Adopted by the La Crosse County Board this _____ Day of _____, 2021