



Muscatine County Board of Health

Position Statement: Effect of Racism on Public Health

WHEREAS, Muscatine County is home to over 42,000 residents, which is comprised of 76.2% White, 18.3% Hispanic or Latino, 3% Black or African American, 1.2% Asian, 0.7% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.2% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 1.6% claiming two or more racial/ethnic backgrounds¹; and

WHEREAS, race is a social construct with no biological basis² ; and

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism that is internalized or interpersonal; systemic racism that is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks; and

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life, and research demonstrates that racism itself is a social determinant of health³ ; and

WHEREAS, more than 100 studies have linked racism to worse health outcomes⁴; and

WHEREAS, continuing efforts are needed to build ties between local governments and communities focusing on health equity to achieve community-centered solutions that meet the needs of all county residents;

WHEREAS, the Muscatine County Board of Health desires to promote racial equity, inclusion and diversity in its public health programs and services; and

THEREFORE, the **Muscatine County Board of Health** endorses this statement and as a Board and with the Public Health staff, together we:

1. Acknowledge that racism is a public health issue affecting our county.
2. Promote and support policies that prioritize the health of all people.

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/muscatinecountyiowa> visited on 9/15/20

² García JJ, Sharif MZ. Black Lives Matter: A Commentary on Race and Racism. AmJ Public Health. 2015; 105: e27–e30. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2015.302706)

³ Confronting Institutionalized Racism. Phylon. 2002; 50(1/2):7---22; and American Public Health Association. Racism and Health. Available at: <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>. Accessed May 2, 2020.

⁴ Institute of Medicine. Unequal Treatment. <https://www.nap.edu/read/10260/chapter/2#7>. May 2, 2020. 10 American Public Health Association. Racism and Health. Available at: <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>. Accessed May 2, 2020. June 15, 2020

3. Encourage racial equity training among all community partners, grantees, vendors and contractors.
4. Promote equity through all policies approved by the Board.
5. Further work to solidify alliances and partnerships with other local government, health and community organizations that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state, regional and national entities to recognize racism as a public health issue.
6. Encourage Muscatine County Board of Supervisors to support similar efforts in county government.

Adopted by the Muscatine County Board of Health, this 17th day of February 2021.

Muscatine County Board of Health:

William Koellner, Chair
Karen Harper, RPH, Secretary
Brian Wright, Emergency Manager
Dr. Michael Maharry, MD
Brandy Olson, JD, CCEP, MBA

Adopted: February 17, 2021

Updated:

Approved:

Reviewed: