

**Kenosha**



**County**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

Subject: A Resolution Expressing Kenosha County’s Commitment to Achieving Racial Equity and Transforming Systems and Institutions Impacting the Health of Our Community.	
Original <input type="checkbox"/> Corrected <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Correction <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmitted <input type="checkbox"/>	
Date Submitted:	Date Resubmitted:
Submitted by: Supervisor Laura Belsky	
Fiscal Note Attached <input type="checkbox"/>	Legal Note Attached <input type="checkbox"/>
Prepared by: Jennifer Freiheit	Signature:

WHEREAS, the promotion of healthy communities is directly related 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 disproportionately impacted by social determinants of health, such as increased exposure to lead, poor air quality, lack of safe places to walk, bike or run, and inadequate health education; and

WHEREAS, Kenosha has wide health disparities among its racial populations; and

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

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions, including individual racism, which is internalized or interpersonal and systemic racism, which 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, systemic racism 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, transportation, and criminal justice and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have linked racism to negative health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services determined that African Americans and Native Americans have the highest excess death rates at every stage in the life course, and the infant mortality rate of Non-Hispanic Black infants is the highest in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the 2018 infant mortality rate in Kenosha County among Black mothers was 9.9 deaths per 1,000 live births, compared to their white counterparts, a rate of 3.5 deaths per 1,000 births; and

WHEREAS, Black mothers in Kenosha County are 2.5 times more likely to receive inadequate prenatal care than their white counterparts; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, Black babies with low birth weight was 18.3% in Kenosha County, while white babies low birth weight was at 6.7%. Respectively, 84.6% of white mothers in Kenosha County are breastfeeding upon hospital discharge whereas only 56% of Kenosha County Black mothers are breastfeeding upon discharge; and

WHEREAS, due to decades of policies like redlining and biased lending, white people are 3.7 times more likely to own a house than their Black counterparts and 1.5 times more likely than the Latinx population; and

WHEREAS, Kenosha County's Black population is half as likely to have a postsecondary degree, a third as likely to test proficient in grade 3-8 subjects on standardized testing, anywhere from 3 to 27 times less likely to meet the ACT college readiness benchmarks, and graduate high school about 15% percentage points lower than their white counterparts; and

WHEREAS, Black people in Kenosha County are half as likely to gain employment than their white counterparts, and get paid half as much; and

WHEREAS, the Census estimates that 1/3 of Kenosha County's Black population lives in poverty (3 times that of Kenosha County's white population), which translates to \$12,760/year for the individual or \$26,200 for a family of four; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 County Health Rankings place Kenosha County residents 65<sup>th</sup> out of 72 Wisconsin Counties for Quality of Life, indicating that residents averaged 3.7 "physically unhealthy days" in the past 30 days; and

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

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Public Health Association is committed to achieving health equity and convened a Racial Equity Workgroup in 2017; and

WHEREAS, while there is no epidemiologic definition of "crisis," the health impact of racism clearly rises to the oft-cited definition proposed by Galea (2017)\*: "The problem

must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of largescale solutions”;

WHEREAS, with support from community partners, it is Kenosha County’s responsibility to address racism, including seeking solutions to reshape the discourse and actively engaging all citizens in racial justice work; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, based on the aforementioned, that the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors hereby declares racism as a public health crisis and supports Kenosha County efforts to address public health disparities due to racial inequities throughout Kenosha County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Kenosha County Board of Supervisors expects that those Kenosha County efforts will include, but not be limited to:

- Asserting that racism is a public health crisis that negatively affects our entire society
- Assessing internal policy and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of Kenosha County
- Working to create an inclusive organization identifying specific activities to increase diversity across its workforce and in leadership positions
- Incorporating inclusion and equity into organizational practice, offer educational trainings/activities to expand employees' understanding of how racism affects individuals, the health of marginalized populations, and provide tools to assist employees to engage actively and authentically with communities of color
- Advocating for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and support local, state, and federal initiatives that advance social justice, while also encouraging individual employee advocacy
- Encouraging other local, state, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

\* Galea, Sandro. Crying “Crisis”. Dean’s Note. Boston University School of Public Health. <https://www.bu.edu/sph/2017/04/23/crying-crisis/>. Accessed 07.03.2020.

Respectfully Submitted:

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE:**

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Excused</u>
_____ Laura Belsky, Chairman	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Andy Berg, Vice-Chairman	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Jerry Gulley	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ David Celebre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Sandra Beth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Erin Decker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Lon Wienke	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>