



# TOWN OF HAMDEN

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Curt Balzano Leng  
*Mayor*  
July 17, 2020

Hamden Government Center  
2750 Dixwell Avenue  
Hamden, Connecticut 06518  
Tel: (203) 287-7100  
Fax: (203) 287-7101

Legislative Council  
Hamden Government Center  
Hamden, CT 06518

Re: Resolution Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Emergency in the Town of Hamden

Honorable Members:

Enclosed please find a Resolution declaring racism to be a public health crisis & emergency in the Town of Hamden. This Resolution gives the Town a clear path to intentionally acknowledging and addressing disparities and inequities in our communities. Adopting a formal Hamden Resolution can catalyze and authorize data analysis, policy analysis to prevent unintentional injustices, and implementation of policies and actions to dismantle or course-correct problematic systems.

As a result of the trauma inflicted by racism and the purposeful disinvestment in social and economic well-being, people of color live with disproportionately higher cortisol levels, higher rates of chronic stress, higher rates of chronic disease, lower infant birth rates, higher rates of COVID-19 infection and death, and as a result, pay the ultimate price with their lives. In this time of a global pandemic, we can put these efforts toward immediate and life-saving actions.

In February of this year the Hamden Equity & Inclusivity Task Force (HEITF) was formed to address issues of bias, racism, inequity, inclusivity and related challenges within our community. This group will be tasked with following up on our declaration of racism as a public health crisis. Added to the esteemed list of stakeholders and organizations that make up the HEITF will be the Southern Connecticut State University Department of Public Health and the Quinnipiack Valley Health District. We will continue working together to end disparities in health outcomes, and to examine the role of race as a social determinant of health in our communities and society at large.

Your approval of this very important Resolution is respectfully requested.

Sincerely,

Curt Balzano Leng, Mayor

CBL/dg

Enclosures

cc: Town Attorney Sue Gruen, Finance Director Curtis Eatman, Deputy Finance Director Rick Galarza, Chief of Staff David Garretson, DCOS Patrick Donnelly, Director of Legislative Affairs Walter Morton, Mayor's Office File

## TOWN OF HAMDEN

### PREAMBLE TO RESOLUTION DECLARING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND EMERGENCY

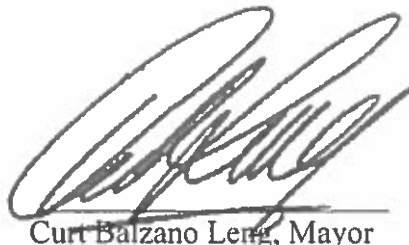
Declaring racism to be a public health crisis & emergency offers a clear path to intentionally acknowledging and addressing disparities and inequities. Adopting an formal Hamden Resolution can catalyze and authorize data analysis, policy analysis to prevent unintentional injustices, and implementation of policies and actions to dismantle or course-correct problematic systems.

Put simply, this is one way to hold ourselves and our local and state governments accountable for addressing racism head on. When we have an emergency affecting our residents safety and well-being we must act.

Why should Hamden take this action? Making a public declaration that racism is a public health crisis is the first step in intentionally embedding health equity in policymaking. This is a way our government can set a clear and direct course toward addressing this crisis, while focusing on actions that are accountable for the intersectional and cross-sector approaches necessary to move towards equity.

How is racism a public health emergency? As a result of the trauma inflicted by racism and the purposeful disinvestment in social and economic well-being, people of color live with disproportionately higher cortisol levels, higher rates of chronic stress, higher rates chronic disease, lower infant birth rates, higher rates of COVID-19 infection and death and pay the ultimate price with their lives. This time of a global pandemic, we can out these efforts toward immediate and life savings action.

In February of this year the Hamden Equity & Inclusivity Task Force (HEITF) was formed to address issues of bias, racism, inequity, inclusivity and related challenges within our community. This group will be tasked with following up on our declaration of racism as a public health crisis. Added to the esteemed list of stakeholders and organizations that make up the HEITF will be the Southern Connecticut State University Department of Public Health and the Quinnipiack Valley Health District. . We will work together to end disparities in health outcomes and examine the role of race as a social determinant of health.



Curt Balzano Lerg, Mayor

**TOWN OF HAMDEN**

**RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
ASSERTING THAT RACISM IS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AFFECTING  
THE TOWN OF HAMDEN AND ALL OF CONNECTICUT**

Presented by: \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism that is interpersonal and/or internalized or 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;

WHEREAS, race is a social construct with no biological basis;

WHEREAS, racism unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources;

WHEREAS, racism is a root cause of poverty and constricts economic mobility;

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life, including housing, education, employment, and criminal justice, and is itself a social determinant of health;

WHEREAS, racism and segregation have exacerbated a health divide resulting in people of color in Connecticut bearing a disproportionate burden of illness and mortality including COVID-19 infection and death, heart disease, diabetes, and infant mortality;

WHEREAS, Black, Native American, Asian and Latino residents are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of inequities in economic stability, education, physical environment, food, and access to health care and these inequities are, themselves, a result of racism;

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

WHEREAS, the collective prosperity and well-being of the Town of Hamden, Connecticut depends upon equitable access to opportunity for every resident regardless of the color of their skin.

Now, Therefore It Be Resolved:

That the Mayor and Legislative Council of the Town of Hamden do hereby assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our town and all of Connecticut, and commit to:

- (1) Working to progress as an equity and justice-oriented organization, by continuing to identify specific activities to enhance diversity and to ensure antiracism principles across our leadership, staffing and contracting;
- (2) Promoting equity through policies approved by the Town and enhance educational efforts aimed at understanding, addressing and dismantling racism and how it affects the delivery of human and social services, economic development and public safety;
- (3) Improving the quality of the data our town collects and the analysis of that data, as it is not enough to assume that an initiative is producing its intended outcome, qualitative and quantitative data should be used to assess inequities in impact and continuously improve;

(4) Advocating locally for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and support local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism;

(5) Working further to solidify alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state, regional, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis;

(6) Supporting community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage actively and authentically with communities of color wherever they live; and

(7) Identify clear goals and objectives, including periodic reports to the Mayor, Legislative Council, Community and Human Rights and Relations Commission, to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Susan Gruen  
Town Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael McGarry, President  
Legislative Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kim Renta, Clerk  
Legislative Council

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Curt Balzano Leng

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2020

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kim Renta, Clerk  
Legislative Council