



## **RESOLUTION**

### **Declaration of Racism as a Public Health Crisis**

**WHEREAS**, the Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Board of Franklin County has the statutory responsibility for planning, funding, and evaluating mental health and addiction services providing a full continuum of care to all citizens representing diverse race, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, mental and physical ability, sexual orientation and other differences;

**WHEREAS**, the ADAMH Board acknowledges that racism is a public health crisis that has negatively impacted the health, mental health and overall well-being of African Americans and people of color; and that racism in its myriad forms, has created individual, institutional, and structural barriers that have negatively impacted African Americans and people of color in all areas of life;

**WHEREAS**, social inequities are driven by racism; and reducing inequities in health require a dismantling of the systems that initiate and sustain inequities in a broad range of societal institutions that have values, policies, procedures, practices, and structures that organize a system in which the dominant racial group is based on a hierarchy of human value that ranks people into social groups called "races," and uses its power to devalue, disempower, and differentially allocate societal resources and opportunities to groups defined as inferior as reported by David Williams, professor of Public Health, and chair of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health;<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, according to Mental Health America, historical adversity that includes slavery, race-based exclusion from health, educational, social and other discriminatory factors, contributes to socioeconomic disparities experienced by African Americans; despite years of progress, racism continues to have an impact on the mental health of African Americans; historical and contemporary instances of negative treatment have led to mistrust of authorities;<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS**, the primary mission and core values of the social work profession, according to the National Association of Social Workers, is to enhance the human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty; and that social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice;

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health indicates that adult African Americans are 20% more likely to report serious psychological distress than white adults; and, African Americans who live below the poverty line are three times more likely to report serious psychological distress than those living above the poverty line; additionally, African Americans are more likely to be victims of serious violent crime than whites – making this more likely to meet diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder; also, African Americans are twice as likely as non-Hispanic whites to be diagnosed with schizophrenia;<sup>3</sup>

**WHEREAS**, the ADAMH Board began cultural competence initiatives after review of a 1989 report from the Ohio Department of Mental Health Minority Concerns Committee, indicating that African Americans and other populations of color are often misdiagnosed, over-medicated, over-hospitalized, given greater severity of diagnosis, and under-utilize community-based care in the state of Ohio; and that these are concerns both locally and nationally;

**WHEREAS**, the ADAMH Board stands fully committed to addressing racism and acknowledges and supports efforts by county and city leaders to declare racism as a public health crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, the ADAMH Board of Franklin County will initiate the following efforts with a goal to reduce and eliminate disparities related to system services; and publicly announce racism as a public health crisis passed by declaration on Monday, June 15, 2020.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the ADAMH Board of Franklin County will:

- 1) Establish a committee led by people of color that include board members, consumers and families, ADAMH staff, provider agency representatives, professional minority associations, and other community partners to help construct a comprehensive plan of action to address racism and behavioral health disparities with the ultimate goal to ensure health equity and cultural competence within all services and operations. This work will align with the Rise Together: Blueprint for Reducing Poverty in Franklin County;
- 2) Commit to a needs assessment process that includes an analysis on racial disparities and inequities;
- 3) Work to resolve the under-representation of racial and ethnic minority staff, clinical professionals, and administration by incorporating a strategy for the recruitment, retention, and promotion of African Americans and other underrepresented populations within the ADAMH network;
- 4) Collect and disaggregate data on race and ethnicity;
- 5) Create an internal diversity council to lead diversity and cultural initiatives for ADAMH staff; and
- 6) Continue to develop, promote and support cultural initiatives within the ADAMH system of care.

**WITNESS THEREOF**, I hereunto subscribe my name on this fifteenth day of June two thousand and twenty.



Erika Clark Jones, CEO  
ADAMH Board of Franklin County



Peggy Anderson, Board Chair  
ADAMH Board of Franklin County

Date: June 15, 2020

Resolution # 20200615-01

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, David R., Cooper, Lisa A. (2019) Reducing Racial Inequities in Health: Using What We Already Know to Take Action. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6406315/>

<sup>2</sup> Black & African American Communities and Mental Health. (n.d.) Mental Health America. Retrieved from <https://mhanational.org/issues/black-african-american-communities-and-mental-health> (Accessed June 10, 2020)

<sup>3</sup> Black & African American Communities and Mental Health. (n.d.) Mental Health America. Retrieved from <https://mhanational.org/issues/black-african-american-communities-and-mental-health> (Accessed June 10, 2020)