

**ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD  
OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY  
RESOLUTION NO. 20-06-01**

**DECLARATION: RACISM IS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS**

**WHEREAS**, the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County is outraged by the recent murder of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement in Minneapolis and a long list of individuals that have died senselessly before him, as well as the horrendous treatment and violent arrest by Garfield Heights law enforcement of Kenta Settles, an individual living with mental illness, due to systemic racism by individuals in power who abuse their authority; and,

**WHEREAS**, the ADAMHS Board has seen the direct impact that racism has on the behavioral health of the residents of Cuyahoga County and believes that racism causes prolonged stress that impacts the physical and mental health of individuals and entire communities and the longer the stress goes unaddressed and unmanaged leads to emotional trauma that creates further disparities in health outcomes; and,

**WHEREAS**, the whole nation, including Cuyahoga County, is in the midst of community stress both from the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest that has arisen in response to racism on all levels and continues to add to the trauma often experienced by racial and ethnic population groups as a result of premature deaths, major assaults on culture, and intergenerational lost opportunities; and,

**WHEREAS**, racism is a driving force behind many social determinants of health, causing persistent discrimination and influencing many areas of life, such as healthcare, housing, education, employment, and criminal justice; and,

**WHEREAS**, communities of color, people with economic instability, and individuals who have disabilities are more likely to experience poor health outcomes and higher instances of mental illness and substance use disorders as a direct result of community stress caused by racism; the current COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and further exacerbated health inequities, especially in the African American community; and,

**WHEREAS**, the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County is not alone in the behavioral health field in believing that the recent deaths and trauma, witnessed by the world, have crystalized the anger and angst born out of a history of pervasive and systemic racism; and,

**WHEREAS**, the ADAMHS Board stands in solidarity with the community, its partners, other forms of government and all members of the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA), and has declared that racism is a public health crisis; stating it is long past time to act, and calls for action from all levels of government and society to eradicate racism steadfastly and commits to:

- Acknowledge racism as a public health crisis and build alliances and partnerships that confront and work collaboratively to end racism.
- Develop local solutions to address disparities and actively engage individuals and communities in racial and social justice work.

- Develop, implement, and support policies and practices to end the inequalities in the health of people of color and mitigate exposure to adverse childhood experiences and trauma.
- Ensure health equity and cultural competence within all mental health and substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery support programs, ensuring services meet the local needs of diverse populations.
- Engage ALL communities to work with state and local behavioral health leaders to develop and promote prevention and awareness efforts designed to reduce stigma, address trauma, and eliminate barriers to care; and,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:**

1. The ADAMHS Board of Directors recognizes the far-reaching importance of condemning racism, addressing systematic racism and committing to change and monitor efforts to ensure equity in mental health and addiction treatment and recovery support services to improve health outcomes and the overall health and well-being of the community.
2. The ADAMHS Board unanimously supports passage of this resolution declaring that racism is a public health crisis and will work tirelessly to achieve equity and a healthy community where racism is not tolerated.
3. The ADAMHS Board unanimously supports that all law enforcement treat people living with a behavioral health issue, as well as all people, be treated with dignity and respect, and will continue to ensure that all law enforcement be properly trained to identify individuals living with a mental illness and/or substance use issue and de-escalation techniques.

On the motion of Harvey A. Snider, Esq., seconded by Katie Kern-Pilch, ATR-BC, LPC-S, the foregoing resolution was adopted.

**AYES:** R. Blue, G. Boehm, C. Bryant, E. Caraballo, R. Fowler, G. Howard, P. James-Stewart, K. Kern-Pilch, S. Killpack, M. Rodas, S. Rosenbaum, H. Snider, M. Van Voorhis

**NAYS:** None

**DATE ADOPTED:** June 24, 2020