The Network for Public Health Law

Ideas. Experience. Practical Answers.

How to Work with Local Leaders to Declare Racism a Public Health Crisis

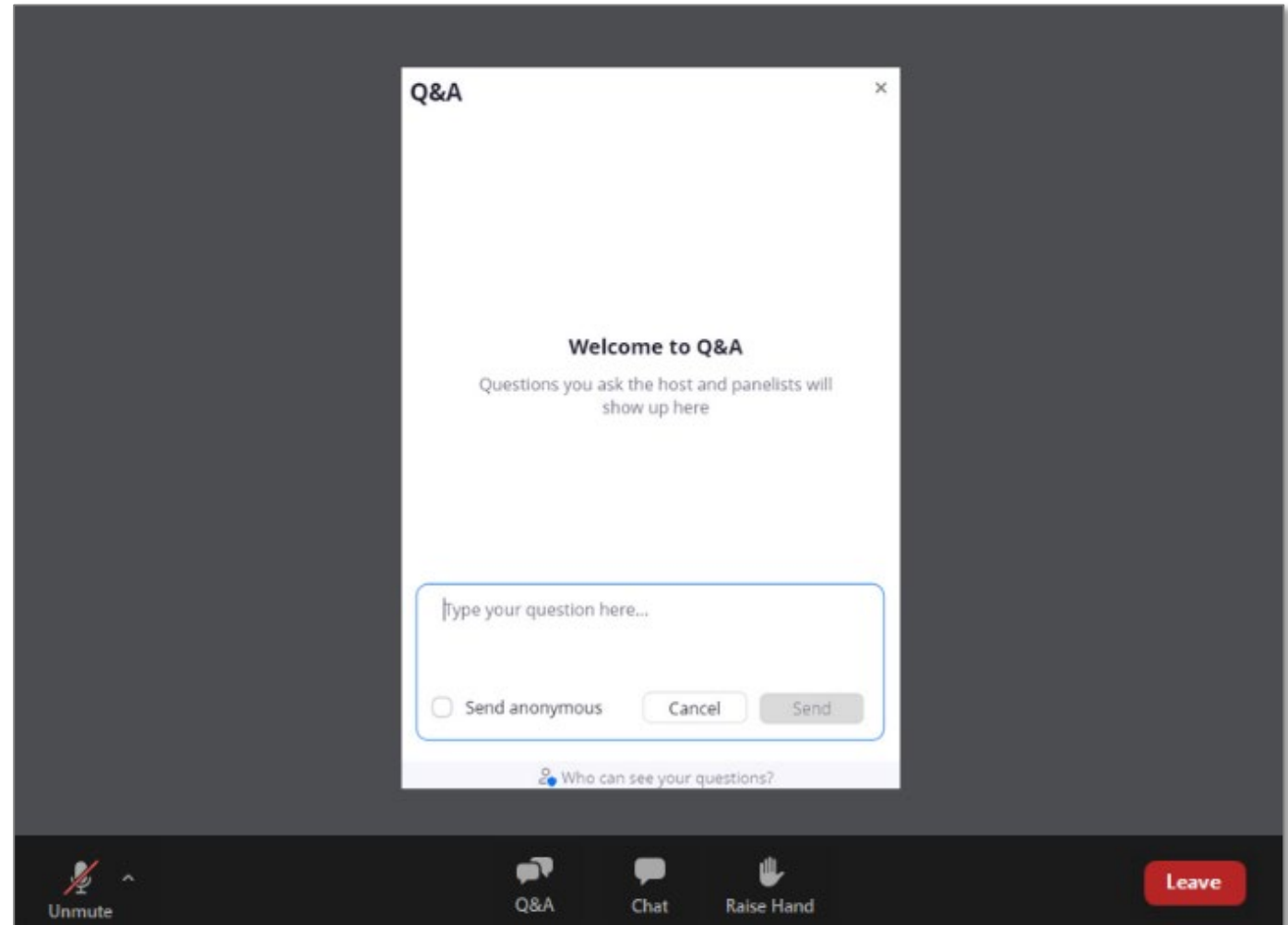**1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. EST | March 17, 2022**

Co-sponsored by:

The Network for Public Health Law

Salud America!

Zoom Q&A

1. Open the Q&A panel

2. Type your question

3. Click "Send"

Presenters

Dawn Hunter, JD, MPH, Region Director, Network for Public Health Law—Southeastern Region Office

Amanda Merck, MPH, Research Area Specialist, Salud America! at UT Health San Antonio

Linsey Grove, DrPH, MPH, President, League of Women Voters of St. Petersburg Area

Developments in Addressing Racism as a Public Health Issue – a national perspective

Presented March 17, 2022

Dawn Hunter, JD, MPH

The Network for Public Health Law

RACISM IS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Resolutions and Declarations Across the US

111 City Councils 78 County Boards 16 Mayors
4 Governors 5 State Leg 1 Federal
7 Universities 4 School Boards 16 Nonprofits

Data as of 10/22/21 @alexbhill

Twitter: @alexbhill

More than 230 declarations issued across the U.S.

» **April 2020 → 9**

» **November 2020 → 207**

» **27 through October 2021**

2022 – all about implementation

Formalizing Commitments:
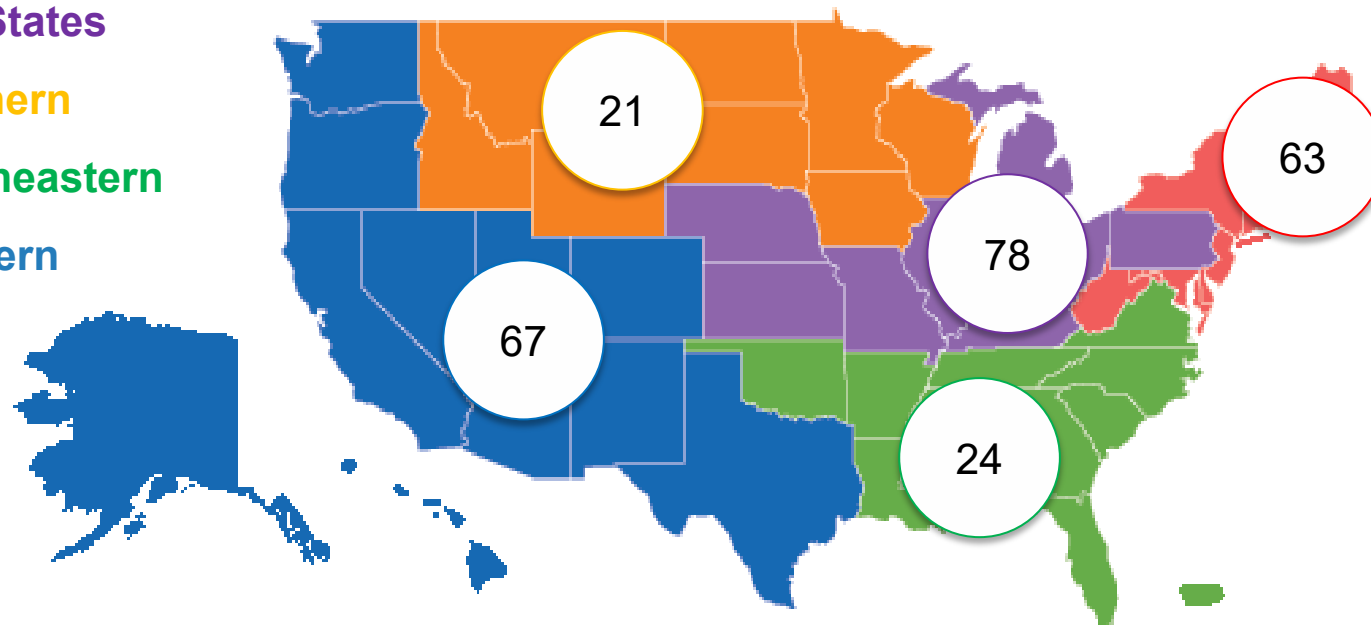# Declarations of Racism as a Public Health Crisis

Eastern

Mid-States

Northern

Southeastern

Western

21

63

78

67

24

Through October 2021

It's not just government entities…

Professional Associations
- American Medical Association
- State Public Health Associations (e.g. Arizona, Wisconsin)
- State Primary Care Associations and Medical Societies

Insurers
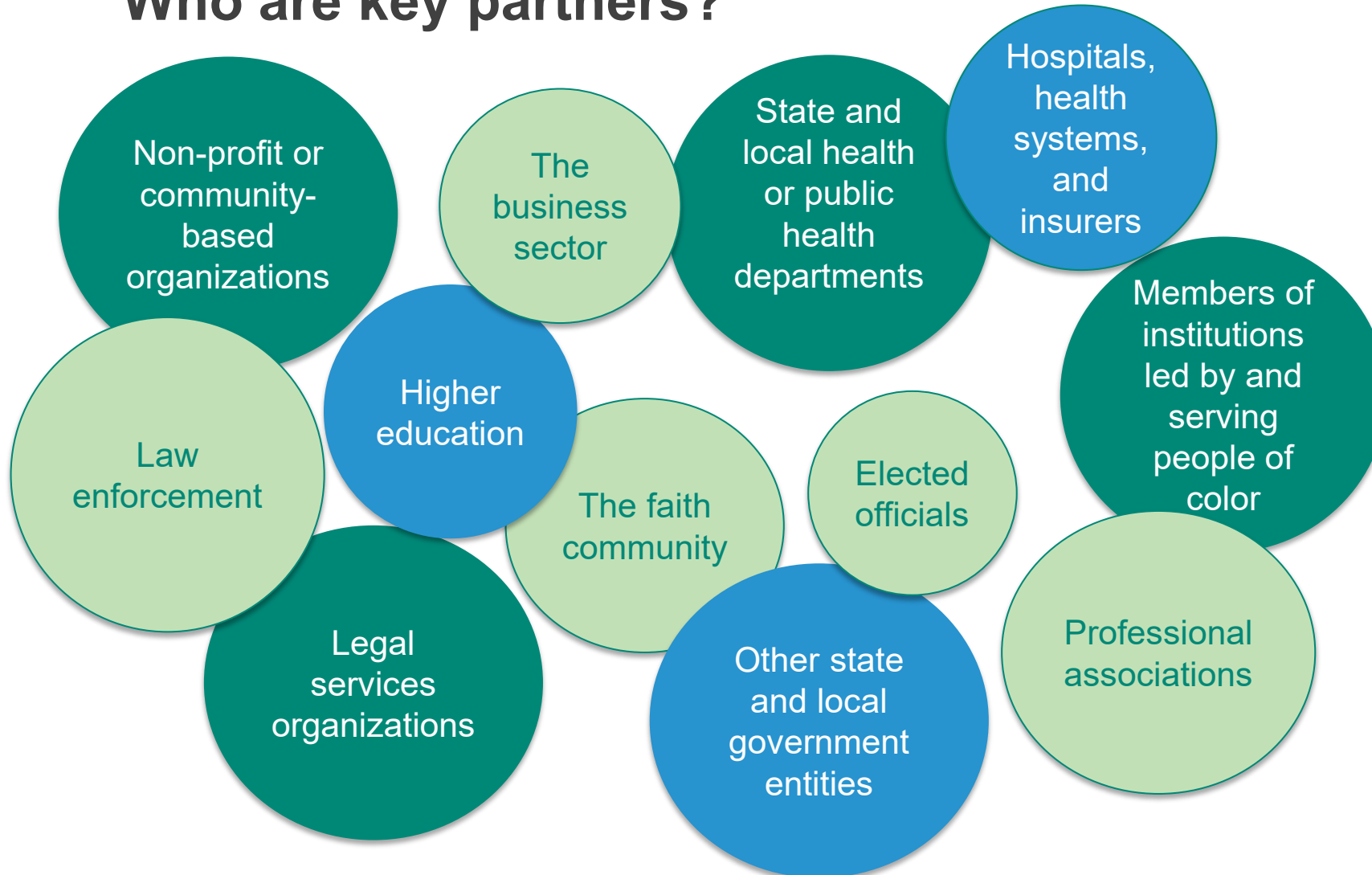- BCBS of Illinois
- BCBS Association

Hospitals and Health Systems
- 12 health care organizations in Utah
- 36 health care organizations in Chicago
- Healthcare Anchor Network
- Kaiser Permanente
- RWJBarnabas Health

Universities
- Rutgers University School of Public Health
- Oregon State
- University of Utah

Who are key partners?
- Hospitals, health systems, and insurers
- Non-profit or community-based organizations
- The business sector
- State and local health or public health departments
- Members of institutions led by and serving people of color
- Higher education
- Law enforcement
- The faith community
- Elected officials
- Legal services organizations
- Other state and local government entities
- Professional associations

Operative Statements in Local Declarations

Typical Components:

✓ A **clear declaration** that racism is a public health crisis or emergency

✓ Measures pertaining to **organizational policy or practice**

✓ Emphasis on **partnerships and collaboration**

✓ **Accountability measures**

✓ Focus on a **specific issue**

✓ A **call to action** to other local, state, and national leaders

✓ **Funding or Infrastructure** proposals
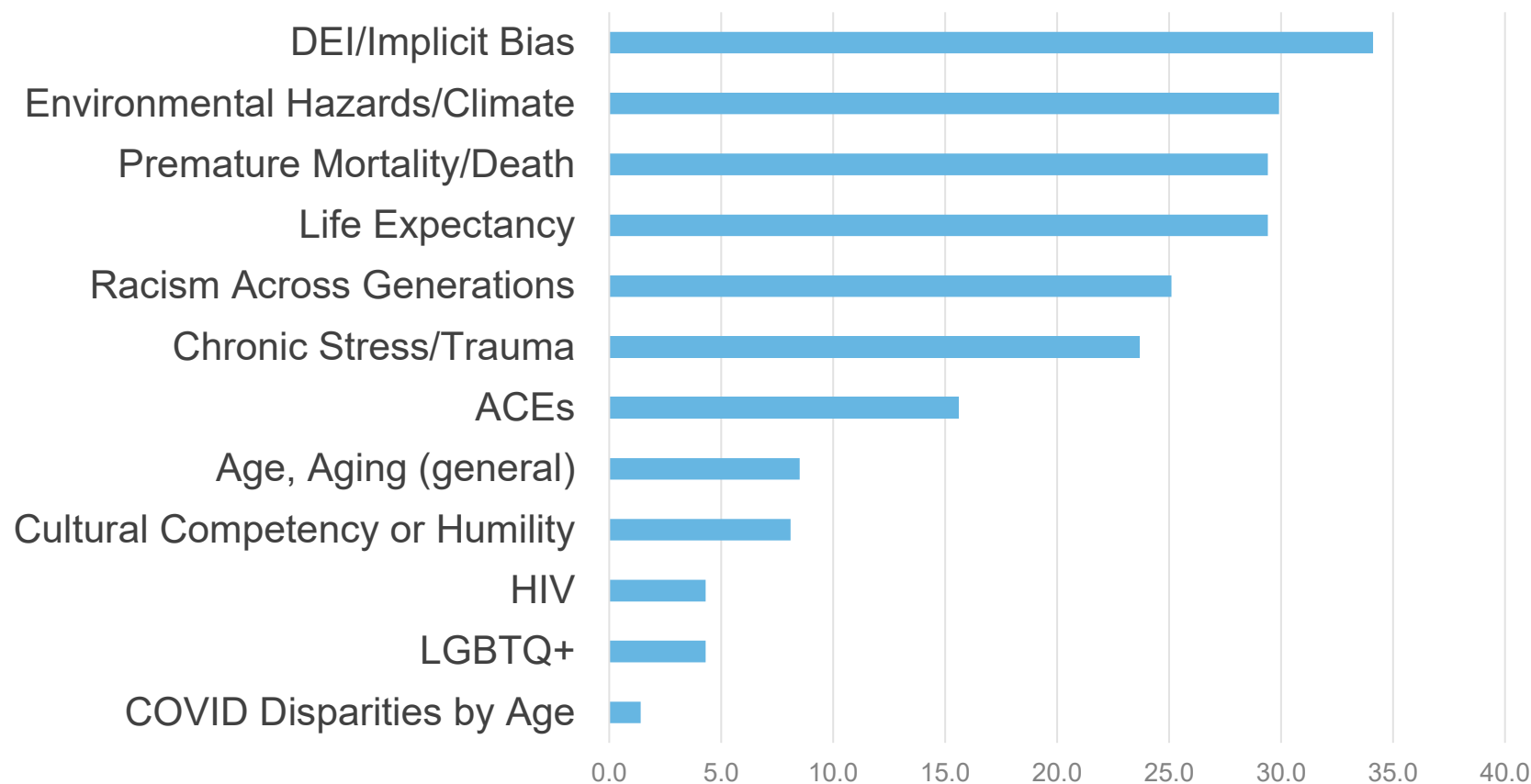
Three common threads across declaration preamble statements

Racism affects lifelong health outcomes even before birth and across every stage of life.

Racism significantly reduces life expectancy and increases premature mortality.

Unequal access to opportunity affects economic stability, homeownership, and intergenerational wealth accumulation.
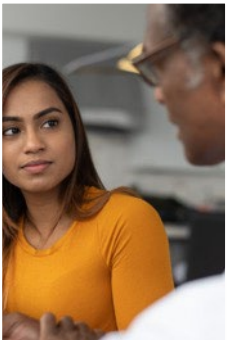
Operationalizing

Establishing policies and procedures to support community leaders, seek community expertise, and incorporate community priorities in planning and budget decisions

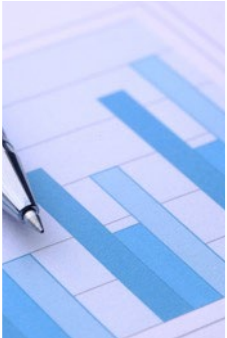Establishing an enterprise-wide equity framework

Building workforce capacity through training and professional development in health and racial equity, anti-racism, trauma-informed and culturally-appropriate services, etc.

Reviewing, revising, and enacting laws and policies that address specific health and racial equity issues

Operationalizing

Directing agencies to collect, analyze, and publish racial equity data

Establishing or supporting existing commissions, offices, working groups, and positions dedicated to advancing health and racial equity

Requiring legislative racial equity impact assessments

Designing specific interventions to address the social determinants of health

Takeaways

- ➤ Acknowledge history
- ➤ Make a public commitment
- ➤ Fund the work
- ➤ Build workforce capacity
- ➤ Focus on internal improvements first
- ➤ Partner to expand your reach and impact
- ➤ Use racial equity tools
- ➤ Design specific interventions
- ➤ Monitor your progress

Where can you find key resources, connections, and guidance as you work to advance health and racial equity and anti-racism action?

Collaborative for Anti-Racism and Equity

- Streamline access to key resources and information
- Facilitate connections
- Center and amplify community-led efforts and community-generated ideas
- Inform legal and policy solutions

Antiracismandhealth.org
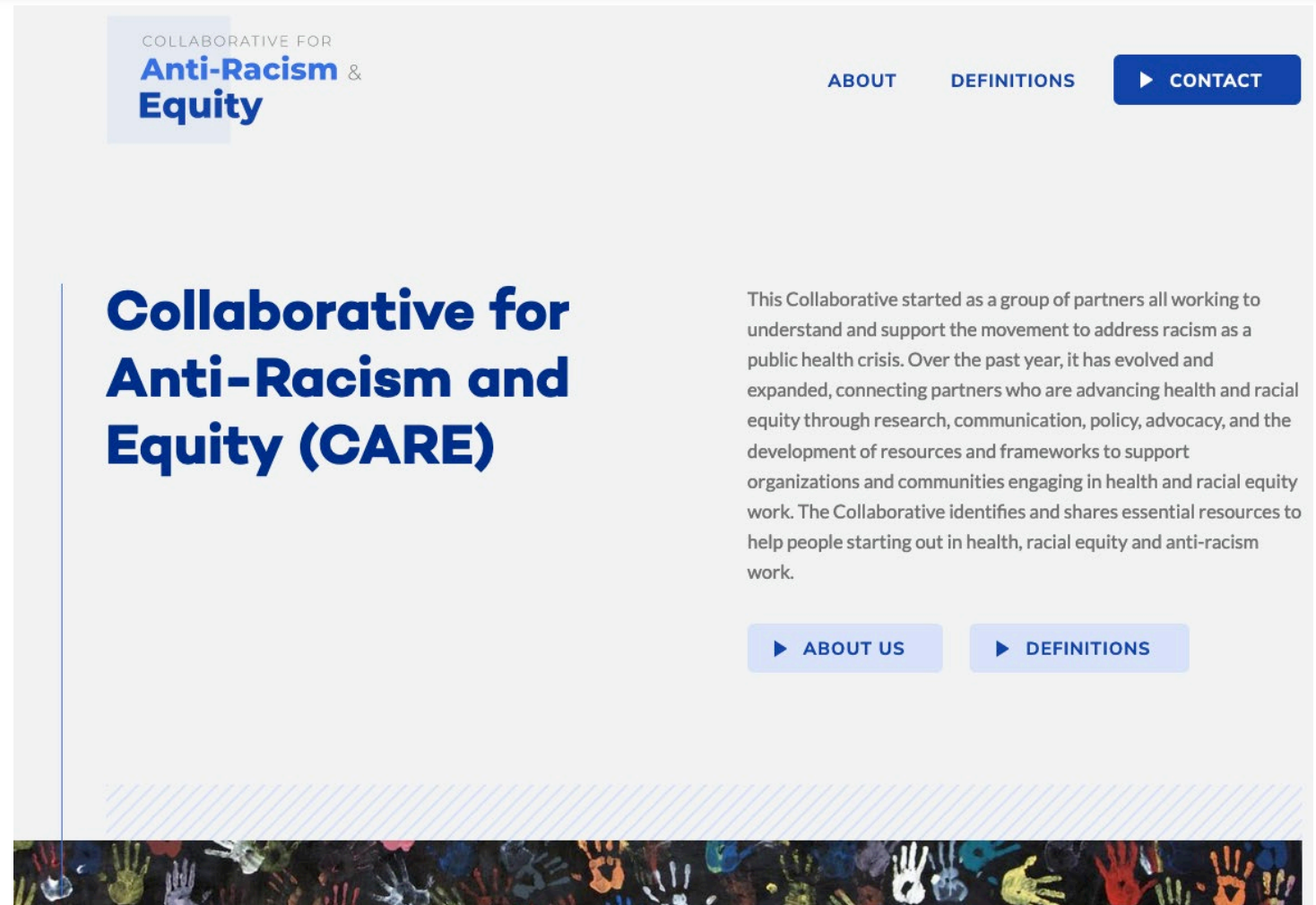
Core Partners

What we've done

Expanded from 5 core partners to 10.

Hosted two interactive workshops last year on Racism as a Public Health Crisis – From Declaration to Action at:
- The Network's 2021 Public Health Law Conference
- The APHA Annual Meeting & Expo 2021

Developed of the Collaborative website.

Supported each other's projects and amplified each other's work.

Where we're going

We aim to improve community wellbeing, and address and redress the tangible, daily harms of systemic racism for all people.

In 2022, we plan to:

- Launch a website to feature key resources, projects, and partners.
- Continue to develop and offer workshops.
- Establish opportunities for technical assistance.
- Create a space for learning and connection.
- Continue to inform the narrative about health equity, racial equity, and anti-racism action through outreach and communications.

How you can engage

Check out the resources on the website

Ask us questions - we're here to help

Submit an idea, resource, or connection

Suggest a law, policy, or best practice to highlight

Join the learning community

What are some examples of resources available on the website?

Public Health Law Center

GROUNDED IN EQUITY: EFFECTIVE
PUBLIC HEALTH LAW & POLICY

WEBINAR

**Resources at:
https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/health-equity-and-policy**

Policy Statement:
Achieving Optimal Health for All by Eliminating Structural Racism

1. Acknowledges structural racism as a fundamental cause of heath disparities and recognizes the role public health agencies can play in eliminating racism.

2. Recommends that state and territorial health officials lead internal organizational change efforts that address structural racism in health agencies and support racial healing and transformation within state and territorial public health agencies.

3. Supports jurisdiction-wide efforts to address and eliminate structural racism and advance health equity.

4. Recommends partnerships and collaborations that support local, territorial, and state initiatives to address structural racism, promote health equity, and achieve optimal health for all.

Just Launched!

https://endingracism.apha.org/

![The Network for Public Health Law]

Questions?

Dawn Hunter

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Twitter @dawnmariehunter

Clear Skies for Health Equity in the Sunshine State?

—

Passing Resolutions to Declare Racism as a Public Health Crisis in St. Petersburg and Pinellas County, Florida

Background

St. Petersburg:

- Fifth most populous city in Florida
- Second largest city in the Tampa Bay Area
- Geographically segregated

Pinellas County:

- The most densely populated county in Florida
- 24 municipalities

Our Partners: Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg, Black Health Equity Alliance, League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area, UNITE Pinellas, etc.

City of St. Pete: Resolution Journey

1. Worked with City Council Members to find a "Champion"
   a. Strategic -- Amy Foster
   b. Lessons Learned -- talk with EVERYONE first
2. Legal Department (version 1)
3. Added to Council Agenda
4. Removed from Council Agenda
5. Legal Department (version 2)
6. Assigned/Presented to Youth and Family Services
7. Voted on as a part of the Consent Agenda from YFS Report
8. Passed! *First Florida City to pass this resolution!*

Lessons Learned

- Talk to all council members first and keep them in the loop about your plan so no one feels left out
- Provide folks with plenty of information so they feel comfortable
- Watch out for the Legal department!
- Don't be afraid to stand firm on your resolution language and intent
- Be sure to ADD recommendations that are realistic and make sense for the current capacity of the city
- Build a grassroots movement to put pressure on council members

Pinellas County: Current Journey

1. St. Pete City Clerk sends copy of City Resolution to County Administration
2. Commissioner Flowers decides to move forward with resolution at County
   a. Our partners did not know this until we started our grassroots efforts
3. Meet with Office of Human Rights for Consultation
   a. Hesitation and Feedback
   b. Navigate other administration channels
4. Begin meeting with Commissioners and identify Champion
   a. Commissioner Flowers was a good fit - she had sent the resolution to Legal
   b. Provide information about surrounding local governments and their resolutions
5. Legal Department review and edits

Next Steps

1. Come to an agreement with Legal on resolution language
2. Complete meetings with Commissioners
3. Monitor proposed Commission Workshops on the resolution
4. Begin engaging with community partners to put pressure on Commission to pass resolution
5. Resolution added to agenda for a vote by Commissioners
6. Passage

Questions?

Contact Info:

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League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area
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Action Pack: Create a Meaningful Resolution on Racism as a Public Health Crisis

Amanda Merck, MPH
Content Curator, *Salud America!*
UT Health San Antonio

Program Team: Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH (Director), Cliff Despres (Communications), Julia Weis (Project Coordinator), Josh McCormack (Curator), Amanda Merck (Curator), Tenoch Aztecatl (Video Production/Director)

UT Health
San Antonio
Institute for Health
Promotion Research

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

4 Steps to Meaningful Resolutions

① Connect with Community Advocates

② Create a Working Draft of a Resolution

③ Ask Local Leaders to Take Action

④ Build Community Support

Download the action pack: salud.to/resolutions

Before You Start

💬 **FAQs.** Why is racism a public health crisis? How can a resolution help? Etc.

📙 **Guidebook: Framing Health Inequities in the Context of Systemic Racism.** This guide will help you understand how to frame health inequities in the context of systemic racism.

📰 **Read a Case Study.** Government employees in Buncombe County, N.C., collaborated across sectors to pass resolutions to declare racism a public health and public safety crisis.

📢 **Technical Assistance.** Email Amanda Merck, merck@uthscsa.edu, your lead Action Pack coach, for help. Our other coaches, Josh McCormack, Julia Weis, and Tenoch Aztecatl may also respond.

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FAQs

- What is racism, classism, and bias?

- What does racism, classism, and bias have to do with health?

- How have racism and classism impacted community planning, historically?

- How do racist and classist practices impact public health, today?

- Is racism a true public health crisis?

- What are some important commitments to action a city can take alongside a resolution?

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Guidebook: Framing Health Inequities in Context of Systemic Racism

4 considerations to frame how system racism impacts public health:
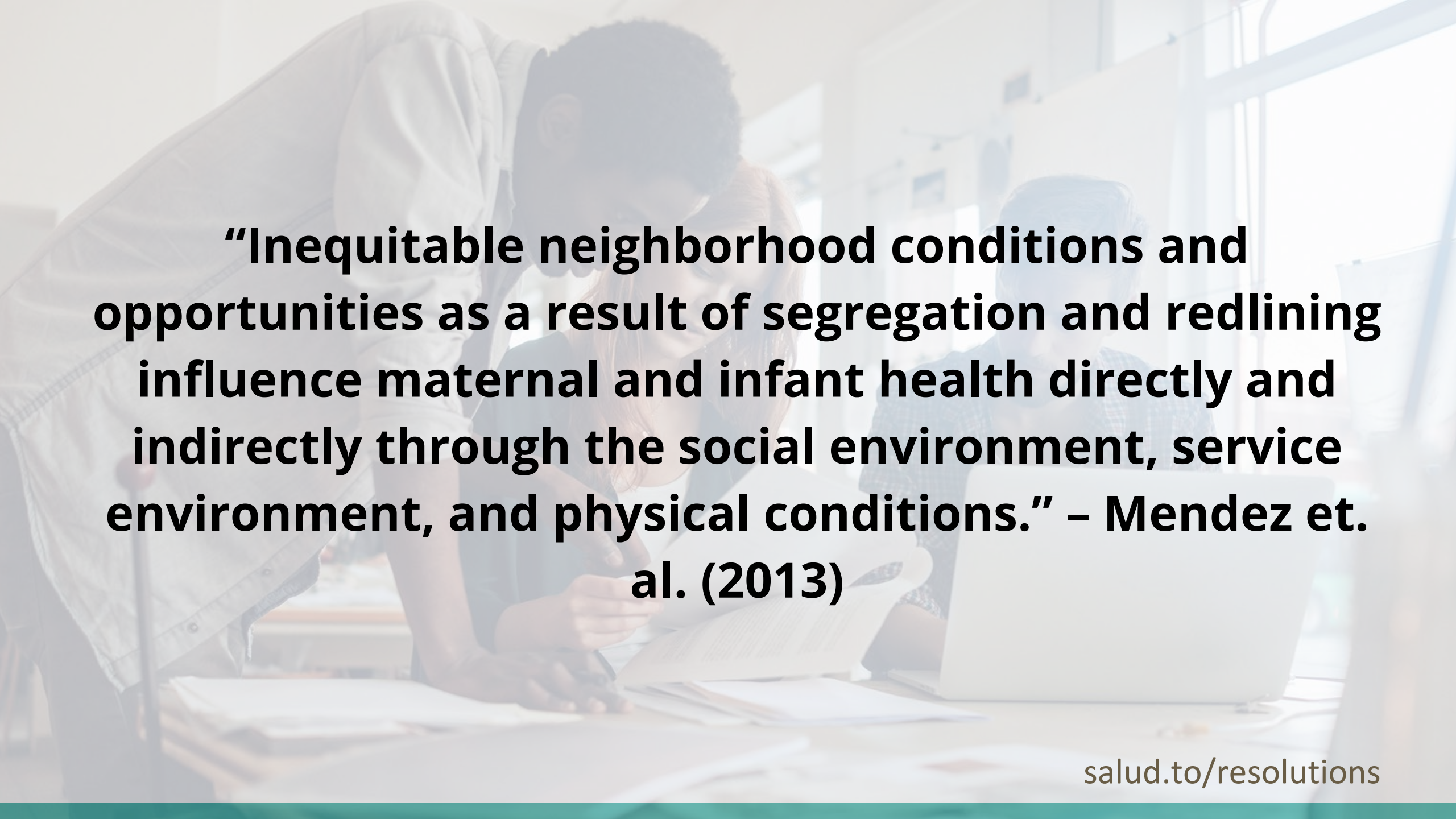
1. Share local data on health outcomes (disaggregated by race/ethnicity, income & education)

2. Briefly explain social determinants of health literature

3. Frame health inequities within the historical context of systemic inequities in social and economic conditions

4. Frame inequities in social and economic conditions within the context of racist/classist practices that created systemic barriers to access and opportunity

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Framing Systemic Racism Through Infant Mortality

1. **Data**: Share local data on infant mortality in your city/county across racial/ethnic, income, and education groups

2. **SDOH**: Explain that risk factors for infant mortality include neighborhood conditions, such as segregation, environmental pollutants, poverty, violence, and access to essential resources, like healthy food, maternal health, and prenatal health

3. **Systemic Inequities**: Share local data on social and economic conditions and outcomes across racial/ethnic, income, and education groups

4. **Racist/Classist Practices**: Share past and present policies that created the inferior social and economic conditions for neighborhoods of color and low-income neighborhoods

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Real-Life Context

- High school has low graduation rate
- Neighborhood vacancy and crime
- Inadequate transportation
- Tuition reimbursement program overlooks remedial classes
- Limited by weekly work schedule
- State did not expand Medicaid
- Costly vehicle ownership
- Unreliable vehicle
- Late buses and rides from family

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"Inequitable neighborhood conditions and opportunities as a result of segregation and redlining influence maternal and infant health directly and indirectly through the social environment, service environment, and physical conditions." – Mendez et. al. (2013)

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① **Connect with Community Advocates**

Use our tools to engage racial/ethnic organizations, social justice groups, public health agencies, and others to share information and listen.

- Guidance to find community advocates
- Model email
- Talking points

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Dear [Racial/Ethnic and/or Social Justice Organization],

I am emailing to ask your input and guidance on urging our local government leaders to pass a resolution to declare racism a public health crisis alongside a commitment for action.

[IN 1 OR 2 SENTENCES INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND STATE WHY YOU CARE ABOUT THIS ISSUE]

As you know, inequities in health are well-documented between whites and Blacks, Latinos, and other people of color, contributing to higher rates of infant mortality, diabetes, heart disease, COVID-19, and premature death among people of color than whites.

This is because past and present racial/ethnic injustices have created inequities in the social and economic conditions in which we live, learn, work, and play.

The problem is systemic. Systemic racism is a public health crisis.

4 Steps to Meaningful Resolutions

① Connect with Community Advocates

② **Create a Working Draft of a Resolution**

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Download the action pack: salud.to/resolutions

② Create a Working Draft of the Resolution

Use our tools to help you and other community leaders explore language and strategic actions to consider when drafting parts of the resolution.

- Guidebook: Considerations in Drafting a Resolution
- Guidebook: Framing Health Inequities in the Context of Systemic Racism

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Writing a Draft Resolution
Thinking Through What to Include

- Considerations for the preamble or "whereas" section
- Considerations for the operative or "resolved" section

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Considerations in Drafting a Resolution

- **Preamble Section**: Establish a foundation upon which to build consensus for the strategic actions that will be included in the operative section.
    - Acknowledge history of racism, discrimination, and segregation
    - Link racism to unfair social and economic conditions and poor health outcomes
    - Share local examples of inequities in social, economic, and health outcomes
    - Acknowledge the role local jurisdictions play in helping communities address these issues
    - Establish a vision to eliminate systemic racism
    - Obtain a statement of support or encouragement from other leaders
- **Operative Section**: Include strategic actions to:
    - address the underlying beliefs that fuel racism
    - uproot the systemic issues that perpetuate health inequities
    - facilitate healing within and across communities.

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Potential Actions

- **Data**: Improve disaggregated data collection, analysis, and reporting
- **Racial Equity Plan**: Develop and implement a racial equity strategic action plan
- **Law**: Explore discriminatory civil, criminal, and public policies as well as alternatives to produce a more just application of the law
- **Equity in all Policies**: Promote an "equity in all policies" approach for all future policies and programs or commit to reviewing existing policies and programs through a racial equity lens
- **Schools**: Restructure school finance and rezone boundaries to ensure equitable finance and racial and economic diversity

- **Zoning**: City-wide zoning reform to eliminate single-family zoning and remove restrictions on minimum lot sizes
- **Transportation**: Improve public transportation
- **Location Affordability**: Identify where affordable housing and affordable transportation coexist, track progress on cost burdened households, and use findings to inform meaningful action steps
- **Police**: Support ban on use of choke holds and other forms of excessive force on individuals as an acceptable practice
- **Accountability**: Establish a set of measurable goals, both long-term and short-term, and regularly assess progress

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4 Steps to Meaningful Resolutions

1. Connect with Community Advocates

2. Create a Working Draft of a Resolution

3. **Ask Local Leaders to take Action**

4. Build Community Support

Download the action pack: salud.to/resolutions

③ **Ask Local Leaders to Take Action**

Use our tools to ask your elected officials to consider your draft resolution and ultimately adopt a resolution.

- Guidance to find local leader's contact information
- Model email
- Social media messages

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4 Steps to Meaningful Resolutions

① Connect with Community Advocates

② Create a Working Draft of a Resolution

③ Ask Local Leaders to take Action

④ **Build Community Support**

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④ **Build Community Support**

Use our tools to build community support for a resolution and commitment to action.

- Model email
- Social media messages

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Technical Assistance

Action pack users have access to an Action Pack Coach who can help them use the action pack, customize emails or materials, research issues, and more

Meet Our Coaches

Julia Weis
Coaches on Latino health equity

Tenoch Aztecatl
Coaches on racial/ethnic justice

Amanda Merck
Coaches on systemic health equity, healthy communities

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All Efforts Should Be:

✅ **Inclusive of the needs of Latinos and other people of color**

✅ **Representative of existing inequities**

✅ **Responsibly evaluated/measured**

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Questions

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