AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Public Comments

3. Approval of 03/06/2020 and 06/22/2020 Minutes (Action)

4. Old Business

5. Administrator Comments

6. Adjournment
COMMITTEE: Board of Health Strategic Planning Committee

MEETING DATE: July 2, 2020

MEETING TIME: 5:30 PM

ISSUE:
Position Statement – Racism: A Public Health Crisis

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:
As recent events have demonstrated, racism and other prejudiced practices continue to disproportionately impact the health and lives of people of color and vulnerable populations. The Peoria County Board of Health and Peoria City/County Health Department reaffirm our commitment in addressing equity as a mechanism towards solving structural and institutional discriminatory policies.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:
Approve position statement.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

BUDGET IMPACT:
☐ YES
☐ NO

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:
☐ YES
☐ NO

Health Equity & Workforce Development

PREPARED BY: M. Hendrickson, L. McKnight, and S. Duren

DATE: 6/30/20
Racism: A Public Health Crisis Position Statement

Peoria County Board of Health Recognizes Racism as a Challenge in Becoming a Healthy Community and Supports an Equity Approach to Address the Outcomes of Racism.

The Peoria County Board of Health supports the need to recognize racism and other discriminatory practices as a public health crisis and reaffirming our role in providing an equitable approach towards health.

The Peoria County Board of Health recognizes the following premises in regard to the position statement:

• Racism, as defined by the American Public Health Association, is a negative social system that creates and structures opportunity and assigns value based on how a person looks. Thus, creating conditions that unfairly provide advantage to some and unfairly disadvantage others. Racism may be intentional or unintentional and operates at various levels in society.¹

• Racism is a driving force of the social determinants of health and is a barrier to achieving optimal health. It is a multifaceted experience manifested individually, interpersonally, or systemically, which includes institutional and structural impacts.

• Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, racism has been ingrained in many facets of the American institutions and culture for hundreds of years. Some of us know this more painfully than others from personal experience, while some of us are becoming more sensitized to it from the public recognition of occurrences across the country or from research data related to health outcomes.

• Additionally, the Board of Health recognizes the importance of defining further key areas in regard to racism. Structural racism is further defined as a system of policies, priorities, representations, practices and norms that reinforces ways to perpetuate racial groups. Institutional racism which includes policies and practices that intentionally favor “whiteness”. Lastly, white privilege is defined as the historical and collective advantages “whites” have in accessing resources and assets. ²

• The impact of racism is experienced overwhelmingly by black and brown persons of all ages and is manifested in the form of inequities as well as creates responses that result in physical, emotional, and spiritual distress.

• Lastly, the Board of Health recognize that a comprehensive Health Equity approach and other related strategies are imperative in addressing the devastation of racism.
Position Statement

Racism, a public health crisis and devastates the person and community in physical, emotional, and spiritual ways. Additionally, it creates inequity in those factors that influence health. This leads to significant disparities in the quality and length of life for people of color.

Though the recent national focus has been on law enforcement activities, data from the COVID-19 pandemic and other illnesses has demonstrated racial/ethnic populations, in particular, face various factors in their daily lives which contribute not only to poor health but poor social determinants of health: poverty, discrimination, lack of access to quality education and education and safe living environments. These inequities that exist in both urban and rural populations result in a higher prevalence of chronic diseases and higher chronic disease mortality rates, as well as higher rates of suicide, injury, gun violence, and substance use as demonstrated by not only national data but Peoria County data.

We would fail as a trusted public health leader if we do not recognize and speak out on the impact of racism.

The vision of the Peoria County City/County Health Department (PCCHD) and Board of Health (BOH) directors has been to be a trusted leader in a healthy, thriving community. This position statement highlights the role we have chosen to play in support of efforts as it relates to public health and a healthy community.

As part of the current strategic plan, the Peoria County Board of Health and Peoria City/County Health Department staff have incorporated problem statements and action plans to address equity in structural and institutional racism and discriminatory practices. Improving community health and longevity starts with ensuring all communities feel and are safe and have equitable access to health care, healthy food, good schools, safe and affordable housing and employment opportunities to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle. To this end, the BOH and PCCHD is committed to establishing a clearinghouse of data and outcome metrics as well as taking action under these core concepts:

- All PCCHD policies and practices meet the operational standards of health equity. By recognizing that racism is a social determinant of health and that to truly address Health Equity in policies and practices, the underlying individual and systemic racism needs to be addressed. In
addition, understanding the impacts of generational racism creates community trauma and negatively impacts health outcomes and indicators.

- Diversity is valued and celebrated as a critical asset of our workplace and community. The Peoria County Board of Health and Peoria City/County Health Department work to educate, create understanding, acceptance and change all towards unlearning racism and ensuring equity is applied in all of our organizational policies and practices.
- Reinvestment in communities of color that have been historically devalued. This includes examining built-environmental practices, supporting in community development programming, and advocating for Health in All Policies for redevelopment.
- Supporting the delivery of public health services and community-based interventions to the greatest extent possible,
- PCCHD staff and BOH members actively participate in community dialogues, institutional structure development and actions planning to implement the structural changes required for a healthy community; and
- Advocating to Health Department consumers to actively participate in the election process at all levels of government.

A comprehensive plan for addressing the public health crises associated with racism needs to be developed that reflects the needed support of municipal, educational, spiritual, and healthcare representation. The cornerstone of this plan is Health Equity.

In the past year the PCCHD has engaged in examples of activities which reinforce our goal toward equity by:

- Partnering to establish the first Southside Farmers Market to combat the perpetual food desert and food insecurities in the 61605-area code;
- Prioritizing the distribution of $1.5 million from the Edwards Coal Plant Settlement for lung health education and other environmental health issues to the Peoria County communities of concern;
- Coordinating with the Regional Office of Education and Peoria Public School District 150 to ensure students have access to healthy meals, educational technology, and other supportive resources to enhance the learning experience during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond;
- In partnership with Heartland Health Services Clinic, expanded primary health care and access to Medication Assisted Treatment in collaboration with Peoria City/County Health Department’s services for greater access to comprehensive community health services;
- Aligning social services work with the Peoria County Sheriff’s Office to assist in re-entry programing focused on decreasing recidivism;
• Active in the implementation of the 2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan focusing on mental health, substance use, healthy eating and active living and cancer, with an emphasis on targeting resources and programs to the most vulnerable populations; and
• Supporting efforts on built-environment programming in vulnerable neighborhoods through promotion of community development corporation programs.

As the BOH and PCCHD move forward in our efforts to be contributing members of addressing the racism which impacts the health of our community, we implore/encourage/support/ other community institutions, government bodies/officials, individuals of influence and all citizens to be part of the conversation in developing and initiating the actions to achieve this culture of equity.