

Offered by Councilor Ricardo Arroyo

CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL



ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DECLARE RACISM A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND ON THE CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT OFFICE THAT ASSESSES THE RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT OF ALL CITY OF BOSTON POLICIES, PROCEDURES, REGULATIONS, EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND LEGISLATION

- WHEREAS: Racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism is internalized or interpersonal; and systemic racism is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on an individual's race; *and*
- WHEREAS: According to American Public Health Association, racism is a driving force of the social determinants of health and is a barrier to health equity; *and*
- WHEREAS: According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, racism continues to undermine the health of children, adolescents and families; *and*
- WHEREAS: According to the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), racism has an independent influence on all social determinants of health and racism in and of itself has a harmful impact on health; *and*
- WHEREAS: According to the BPHC, People of Color rank at the bottom of health outcomes in Boston including, but not limited to infant mortality, asthma, hypertension, diabetes, heart disease and life expectancy; *and*
- WHEREAS: In 2017 the Boston Globe published a seven day series titled "Boston. Racism. Image. Reality." and within that series documented many of the systemic barriers to access to care for People of Color in Boston, in spite of Boston having some of the most prestigious and high performing hospitals in the world; *and*
- WHEREAS: While there is no epidemiologic definition of crisis, racism clearly rises to the definition provided by Dr. Sandro Galea, Dean of the Boston University School of Public Health, who stated that to be classified as a crisis the problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of largescale solutions; *and*
- WHEREAS: Milwaukee, Madison and Pittsburgh have declared racism a public health crisis with the goal of proactively combatting and eradicating systemic racism; *and*
- WHEREAS: Declaring racism a public health crisis in Boston is appropriate given the overwhelming evidence racism plays in health inequity, that the majority of residents in the City of Boston are People of Color and that to effectively combat racism we need a largescale solution; **THEREFORE BE IT**
- ORDERED: That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the health outcomes of People of Color in Boston, the impact racism plays on health outcomes, declaring racism a public health crisis in Boston, and systemic solutions to combat the impact of racism in the City of Boston including but not limited to the creation of an independent office to assess the racial equity impact of all City of Boston policies, procedures, regulations, legislation and executive orders.
- FILED ON: March 2, 2020