A RESOLUTION OF THE FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH TO DECLARE
RACISM A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IN FULTON COUNTY, GEORGIA

WHEREAS, the Official Code of Georgia ("the Code") provides that the Fulton County Board of Health has the authority pursuant to O.C.G.A. §31-3-4 to "[t]ake such steps as may be necessary to prevent and suppress disease and conditions deleterious to health";

WHEREAS, the Fulton County Board of Health, in its vision, mission, and core values envisions that all people are healthy and is committed to promoting and protecting the health of individuals, families, and communities, regardless of race, color, creed, age, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or national origin; and,

WHEREAS, racism is rooted in systemic injustice that has led to health inequities, diminished access to care, maltreatment of individuals, and the perpetuation of poor health outcomes and adverse social determinants of health among Black people and people of color, which are conditions deleterious to health; and,

WHEREAS, over 100 scientific studies demonstrate that racism, not race, is the cause of increased morbidity, mortality and generally poor health outcomes, job loss, education and housing instability and disenfranchisement among vulnerable and disparate minority populations; and,

WHEREAS, the Fulton County Board of Health commissioned the Georgia State University through its Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) to conduct a Community Health Assessment in Fulton County and to assess disparities and barriers to achieving the Fulton County goal that All People Are Healthy; and,

WHEREAS, the Community Health Assessment confirms, parallels, and builds upon the findings of the Georgia Department of Public Health that Black residents of Fulton County have lower life expectancies than White residents, are far more likely than people of other races to die prematurely, and are far more likely than people of other races to die of heart disease or stroke; that Black and Hispanic residents are twice as likely to be in poverty as their racial and ethnic peers; that infant and maternal mortality rates among Black families are two to four times the rate of any other racial or ethnic group; and that Black residents are most impacted by HIV when compared to their White and Asian counterparts; and,
WHEREAS, the American Psychological Association (APA) has cited studies finding that “stressors more frequently experienced by racial and ethnic minority groups, including racial discrimination, have been associated with health status and health behaviors” (American Psychological Association, APA Working Group on Stress and Health Disparities. (2017). Stress and health disparities: Contexts, mechanisms, and interventions among racial/ethnic minority and low-socioeconomic status populations. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/pi/health-disparities/resources/stress-report.aspx, citing Ahmed, Mohammed, & Williams, 2007; J. S. Jackson, Knight, & Rafferty, 2010).

In fact, the APA, American College of Physicians, and the American Public Health Association have all determined that the threat of hate crimes resulting in the death of Black people and people of color incites trauma, fear, violence, chronic and acute mental stress and other negative impacts of discrimination which impact the general health and wellbeing of the entire community (Johnson, Steven Ross, “Experts: hate crimes are a public health issue,” Modern Healthcare, August 22, 2017); and,

WHEREAS, the Fulton County Board of Health stands in support of the Hate Crimes Resolution adopted by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners on June 17, 2020, and desires to ensure continuing collaboration between the Fulton County Board of Health and Fulton County as these efforts continue; and,

WHEREAS, the Fulton County Board of Health has partnered with Fulton County to advance a “Health in All Policies” initiative to ensure that positive health outcomes for Fulton County citizens are considered in each official action of the County; and

WHEREAS, Fulton County Board of Commissioners Chairman Robb Pitts has established a Health Disparities Taskforce to review and address health disparity issues in Fulton County and to provide effective health related policy recommendations to his office for presentation to the Board of Commissioners for consideration and incorporation into Fulton County policy that would positively impact health outcomes for County residents; and,

WHEREAS, the Fulton County Board of Health desires to take a stand against racism in Fulton County, and to join the American Public Health Association’s (APHA’s) efforts to enhance racial equality in public health throughout the nation, including through the racial healing (#RxRacialHealing) initiative.
NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Fulton County Board of Health finds that racism is a public health crisis in Fulton County, Georgia.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fulton County Board of Health finds it necessary in order to achieve its mission to prevent and suppress disease and conditions deleterious to health in the community, to identify, address, and eradicate racism in public health, both in personal interactions and in policies, procedures, and systems that perpetuate racial bias.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is the Policy of the Fulton County Board of Health that the understanding that racism in public health is a cause of poor health outcomes must be a guiding principle of the agency.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fulton County Board of Health stands in support of all partners and communities who are working in solidarity to apply long-term strategies and solutions that address the root causes of racial injustice, and applauds the Fulton County Board of Commissioners and the County Manager of Fulton County, Georgia, for their efforts to support hate crimes legislation, the establishment of the Health in All Policies program, and the establishment of the Health Disparities Task Force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fulton County Board of Health authorizes and directs the Executive Director to consider and address racism and its impacts in those internal Board of Health programs, policies, and operating procedures as s/he deems appropriate and necessary, and in the consideration of those partnerships and initiatives s/he may create or join in the quest to protect and improve health outcomes for all people.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is the Policy of the Fulton County Board of Health to be and remain committed to maintaining the Board of Health’s Health Equity Workgroup, designed to examine the agency’s internal structure, policies, and procedures to ensure the Fulton County Board of Health operates as an anti-racist and unbiased organization.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is the Policy of the Fulton County Board of Health to ensure the hiring, training, and maintenance of a diverse public workforce to meet the public health needs of our local communities.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fulton County Board of Health shall be committed to disseminating relevant and evidence-based data to aid our local communities, including racial disparities and disproportional impacts, so that we and all of our partners may properly consider racism and racial disparities in making data based and scientifically informed decisions regarding the health, wellbeing, and immediate needs of our community members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fulton County Board of Health shall seek and incorporate collaboration with community partners and public health stakeholders and participate in advantageous national, state, and local public health efforts designed to thwart racist public health policies, practices, and systems that do a disservice to our community.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall become effective immediately, and that all resolutions and parts of resolutions in conflict with this Resolution are hereby repealed to the extent of the conflict.

SO PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Fulton County Board of Health, this 22nd day of July, 2020.

FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

Chair, Fulton County Board of Health

Secretary, Fulton County Board of Health

Approved as to Form: