

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

We are writing today to affirm that we, the staff of the Office of Health Equity, believe and know that Black Lives Matter. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Rayshard Brooks are just three names of innumerable Black lives lost to racial violence—namely state-sanctioned police violence. The outcry that was incited by the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN is not new to Black people in this country. Because of this fact, we must do better. We must do better for Black people. We must do better for coming generations, so that the fight for racial justice, this demand, this outcry, is the last of its kind. We must name and address systemic racism head on.

On June 12th 2020, Mayor Marty Walsh declared that racism is, in fact, [a public health crisis](#) in Boston. Through the Boston Public Health Commission's (BPHC) Health Equity framework, we understand [Racism](#) as a system of oppression that influences all of the [social determinants of health](#) and has a direct impact on health outcomes.

As a result of racist laws, policies, and practices in the US, our health and wellbeing are influenced by social, political, and environmental conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work, play, and age. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that in Boston, where white households have a median wealth of \$247,500, [Black households have a median wealth of \\$8](#). When compared to white bus riders, Black passengers spend, on average, [64 more hours per year on the MBTA](#). It is no wonder that the premature death rate in the area around the Arlington T stop is [more than 50 percent lower than at Dudley Square](#) station or that Black communities are overrepresented [in infections, hospitalizations, and mortality rates of COVID-19](#). Although these facts and figures are unsurprising, they are unacceptable. These significant differences between Black and white residents are not biological; they are systemic, avoidable, unfair, and unjust.

To be true to both the BPHC mission and vision and truly commit to protecting and serving Boston's most vulnerable residents, we must all take action to reduce inequities and promote racial justice and health equity. Our action towards racial justice and health equity may seem small, but the cumulative impact can be great. We encourage you to participate in ways that speak to you during our nation's racial crisis. This could include:

- Rest, heal and self-reflect.
- [Learn](#) about systemic racism and racial justice through books, articles, podcasts, and videos.
- Attend virtual seminars and discussions.
- Engage in dialogue with your friends and family.
- Help local minority-owned, women-owned, or veteran-owned businesses [get certified](#).
- [Fund and partner](#) with local Black-led organizations.
- [Support](#) and contract with local Black-owned businesses.
- Apply the BPHC [Equitable Community Engagement Plan](#) and [The Guide to Advance Racial Justice and Health Equity](#) so that government decisions reflect the voices and lived experiences of Black residents.
- [Contact](#) your elected representatives and [vote](#).

The Office of Health Equity looks forward to working with you in the days, weeks, months, and years to come to dismantle the systems that perpetuate racism.

In solidarity,

The Office of Health Equity staff at the Boston Public Health Commission