



Statement on Racism and Social Inequity

Racism and Social Inequity is a public health crisis. Too many Black Americans have lost their lives and suffered and are suffering. Racism and Social Inequity has become a part of our public policy, and intertwined into our current public systems, structures, and services. Because these accepted practices, behaviors, and attitudes have become so embraced by the majority white society they were acceptable until the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd and numerous others. This same acceptance has led to the high COVID-19 death rates for black Americans.

Missouri is no different, it has its own history of racist and social inequity embedded in current policy decisions resulting in major health and socio-economic discrepancies for all communities of color. The elimination of social and health inequities/injustices will not be achieved without first acknowledging and addressing racism's contribution to health and social inequities.

The Missouri Center for Public Health Excellence (MOCPE), is committed to eliminating the systems that have allowed these inequities to exist. Racism and Social Inequity has no place in our society. During a period of an unprecedented pandemic, COVID-19, MOCPE supports protected and peaceful protests to enact system change. MOCPE is committed to ensuring that the highest standards of public health practice and services are available and accessible to all people from all backgrounds in all regions of Missouri.

During this time of protest and reflection we are reminded of the words of Dr. Martin Luther King who said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." As advocates for social justice, we in the public health community must respond with one voice in calling for an end to the social and economic structures and deeply held cultural biases, assumptions and practices that foster racism and have for far too long prevented all people in our diverse society from reaching their optimal level of health.

MOCPE abides by the following principles of community:

- **We affirm** the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.
- **We affirm** the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- **We affirm** the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and our organizations.
- **We acknowledge and respect** our differences while affirming our common humanity.
- **We reject** all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including but not limited to, those based on age, color, diverse ability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status.
- **We take** individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias, and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.
- **We pledge** our commitment to these principles

Let us end by unequivocally stating that we stand in solidarity with those speaking out against oppression and that, today and every day, Black Lives Matter.