

Declarations of Racism as a Public Health Crisis

AN ANALYSIS FOR THE FIELD OF INJURY & VIOLENCE PREVENTION



SAFE STATES
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Since 2020, over two hundred resolutions to declare racism a public health crisis have been adopted by jurisdictions across the country. However, little is known about how these resolutions have addressed injury and violence outcomes. Safe States evaluated *Declarations of Racism as a Public Health Crisis* from an injury and violence prevention perspective. Conceptual analysis was used to examine whether outcomes, risk, and/or protective factors related to injury and violence prevention were mentioned in the resolutions. The resolutions were also examined for mentions of policy changes that address the connection between structural racism and violence and injury prevention either directly or indirectly, culturally competent trainings that addresses injury and violence prevention, shifts in cultural norms and language that aid in decreasing rates of injury and violence, and the use or development of measurement tools that assess the efficacy of the declarations in their ability to lower rates of injury and violence. Finally, the purpose was to identify opportunities for Safe States to make unique contributions to the conversation on race and from a public health vantage point.

In addition to analyzing the text of these declarations, Safe States conducted interviews with key governmental, academic, and field-based stakeholders across the country to further explore the effect of *Declarations of Racism as a Public Health Crisis* in their jurisdictions.

The **Safe States Alliance** is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to serving as the national voice in support of injury and violence prevention professionals engaged in building a safer, healthier America. Safe States



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acknowledges the perpetual injustices that racism inflicts on the communities we serve. We commit to promoting racial healing and racial equity in our organizational policies, practices, and values.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM INTERVIEWS

What actions resulted from the resolution passed in your county/city/etc.?

- Creating DEI and equity health positions
- Community coalition building
- Community programming
- Conducting community health assessments
- Creating community health improvement plans

What challenges did you encounter when trying to accomplish those actions?

- Limited funds
- Limited staff resources
- Resistance to change
- Resistance to “liberal/woke” policy

How can Safe States collaborate or support you and your office?

- Provide collaboration opportunities
- Provide information about how to secure financial resources
- Provide collaboration opportunities amongst stakeholders
- Convene a conference

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

for advancing the conversation on race as a public health problem

To best frame the conversation on race and health and move the field forward in the current social and political context, Safe States offers the following recommendations for itself and its extended network of members and partners:



Reframe the Conversation

- Utilize language that can speak to a broad audience.
- Discuss disparities that are across class, gender, region, and age lines to convey how inequality impacts us all.



Focus on Local and Economic Issues

- Invest in reducing homelessness and increasing preventive care screenings and other upstream measures.
- Partner with local businesses to improve communities.



Use an Asset-Based Model When Discussing BIPOC Communities

- Focus on what is working in Black and Brown communities.
- Acknowledge that Black and Brown communities have something to teach.
- Incorporate healing traditions from various cultural backgrounds.



Address Mental Health as a Shared Risk and Protective Factor

- Invest in social-emotional learning in k-12 education.
- Invest in employee wellness programs that include increased leisure time, fitness, nutrition, yoga, and mental health employee resource programs.



Compile a Playbook

- Create an online template to collect strategies, resources, initiatives, and programs.
- Make it public and share the information.
- Evaluate new programs and policies to measure progress and share findings broadly.