



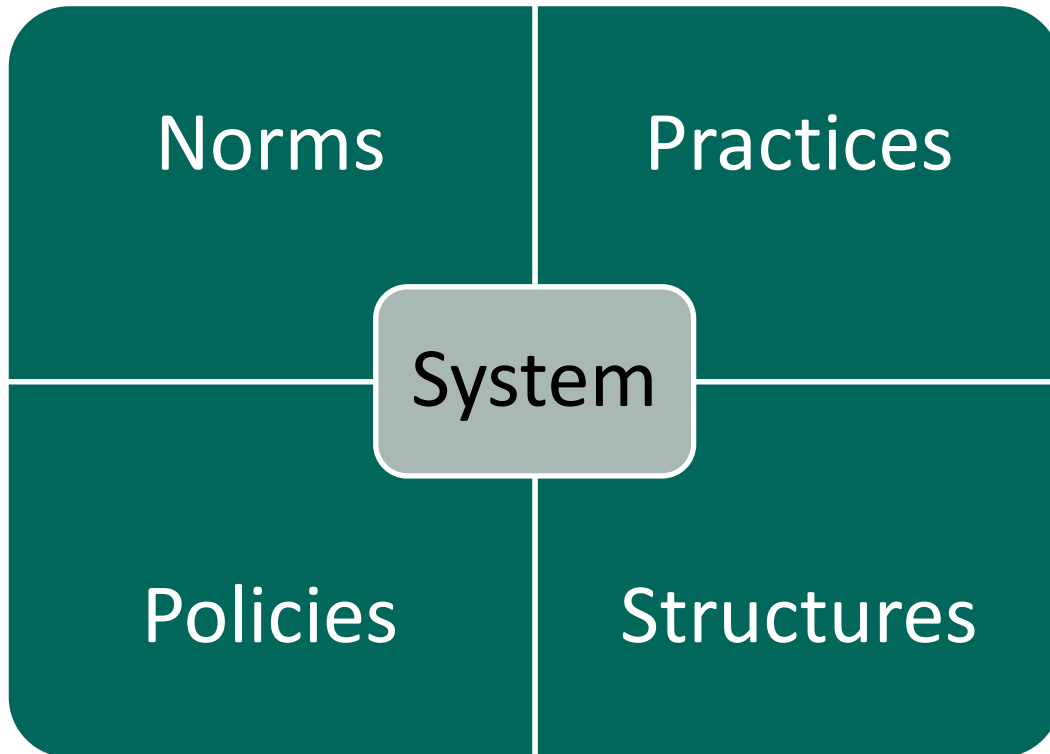
Resolution to Declare Racism a Public Health Crisis in Sonoma County

March 12, 2024



sonoma county
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

Racism



- ▶ Can be interpersonal and structural (e.g., interacting with others negatively based on racist beliefs or institutionalized.)
- ▶ Prevents those affected by it from attaining their highest level of health, and consequently, affects the health of our entire nation.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Racism and Health

Why Declare Racism a Public Health Crisis?

- Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities must continuously bear the weight of coping with a confluence of personal, as well as broader cultural traumatic events, rooted in systemic racism.
- Outcries over the tragic deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many others.
- Growing awareness of acts of violence targeting BIPOC communities.

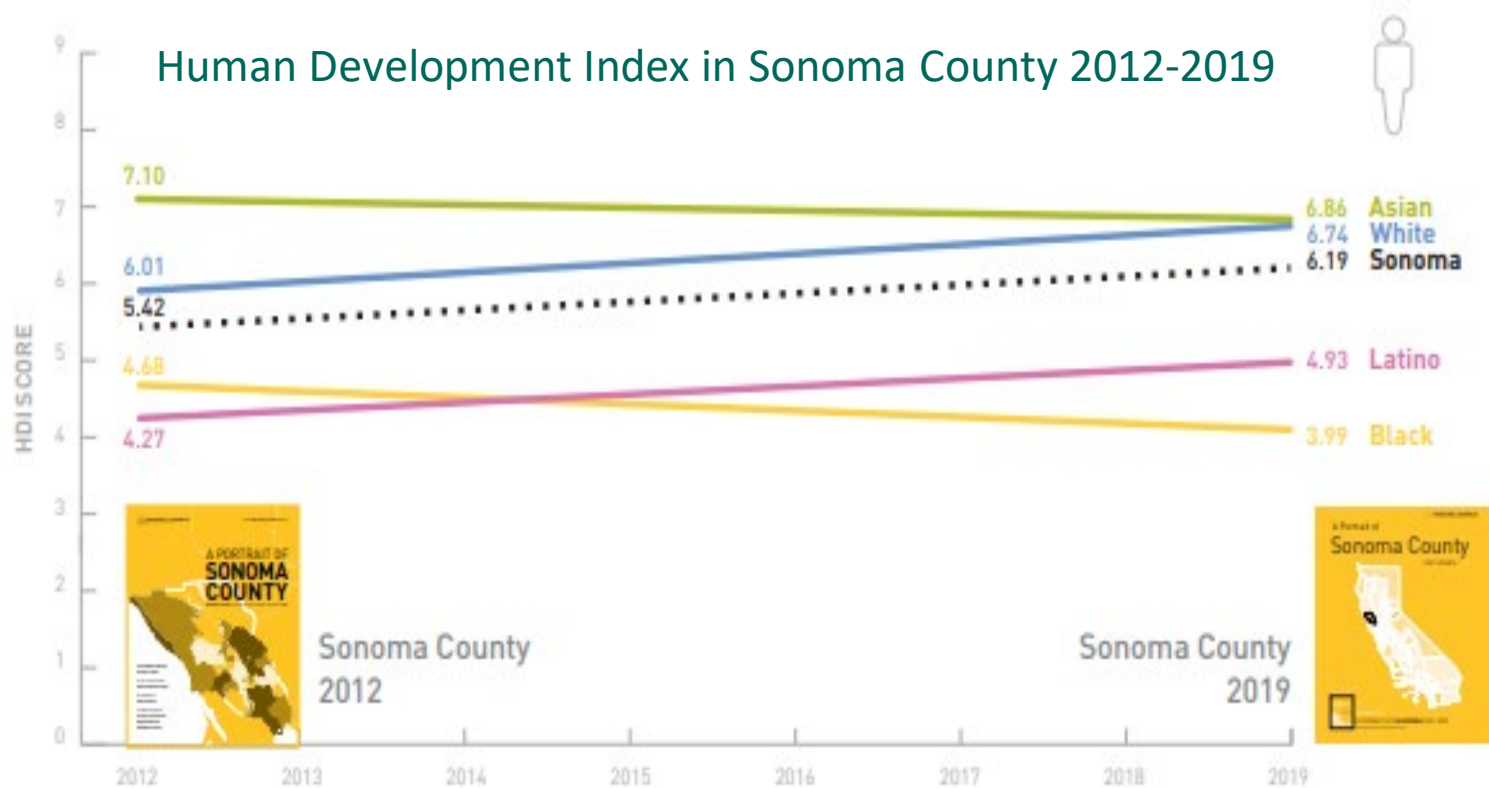
Why Declare Racism a Public Health Crisis?

- Racism is a social determinant of health and is associated with negative mental health impacts for members of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian and Pacific Islander communities.
- COVID-19 pandemic made clear: structural racism threatens the health and well-being of BIPOC. BIPOC communities were disproportionately burdened with severe illness, hospitalization, and death, due to barriers to quality health care, and fewer opportunities to live and work where social distancing is possible.
- Sonoma County system of care serves populations who are disproportionately people of color, and who experience the traumatic effects of systemic racism. As county government, we cannot accept the outcomes of institutional racism – poverty, inadequate access to housing, employment, health and likelihood of intersections with justice system involvement.

How Does Racism Impact Health?

- Systemic disadvantages and racism throughout the lifespan lead to chronic stress that adversely affects the health of Black communities.
- Data shows: racial and ethnic minority groups in U.S. experience higher rates of illness/death across a wide range of health conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, asthma, and heart disease, when compared to their White counterparts.
- Racial bias and segregation in health care still occurs: A 2016 study* found that White medical students, residents and non-medical people held false beliefs about biological differences between White and Black people, including that Black people feel less pain than White people.
- Health outcomes and behaviors are complex: broader inequities and discrimination – unequal access to opportunities/resources, discrimination, and systemic oppression – can all take a toll on the body and create biological changes that affects the health of mothers, newborns, and infants.

What is the Crisis in Sonoma County?

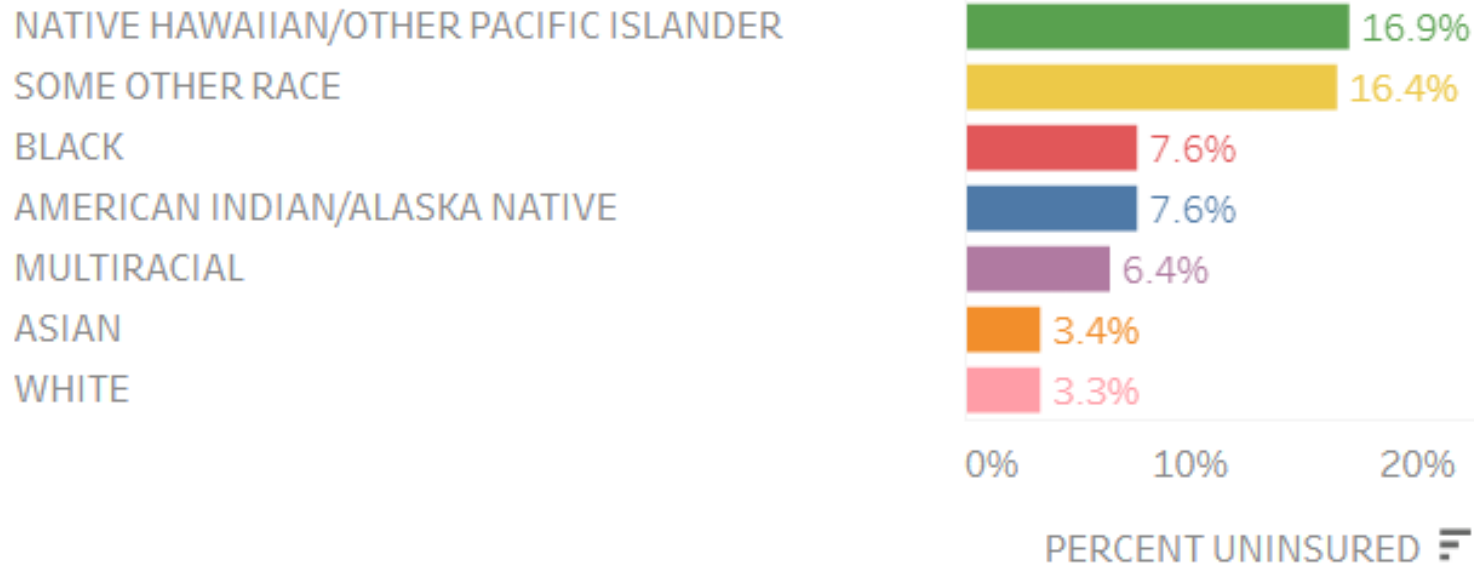


Source: 2012—Portrait of Sonoma County [2014]. 2019—Life expectancy: Measure of America calculations using mortality data from the California Department of Public Health and population data from the US Census Bureau ACS PUMS, 2014–2019. Education and earnings: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau ACS PUMS, 2019.

- In Sonoma County, Black people have a life expectancy at birth that is ten years shorter than white people (71 yrs compared to 81.6 yrs);
- 13% of Latino adults and 10% of Native American adults have at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 41.5% of white adults;
- Median earnings for Latino, Native American, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders is nearly \$15,000 less annually than for white people.

What is the Crisis in Sonoma County?

Percent of the Population in Sonoma County without Health Insurance (2018-2022)



- Sonoma County Black and Hispanic/Latinx children are about 2.5 times more likely to live in poverty than their white counterparts;
- Black people are 2.3 times more likely and Hispanic/Latinx people are 4.1 times more likely to not have health insurance than white people;
- 12% of unhoused persons are Native American/Alaska Native and 8% Black while 2% of the overall county population is Native American/Alaska Native and 2% is Black.

Recommended Actions

- Declare racism a public health crisis
 - Increase attention, change narrative, create will for change
 - Uplift strategies that are already underway
- Adopt Countywide Racial Equity Action Plan in 2024
- Join the nearly 40 other jurisdictions in California that have passed a similar resolution



Recommended Actions

- Commit to strategic action to advance racial equity
 - Foster a County organizational culture that supports achieving racial equity through investments in learning and leadership programs;
 - Identify and deploy best practices that promote racial equity in all community- and internal- facing services;
 - Adopt and implement a Health Equity Action Plan, Community Health Assessment, and Community Health Improvement Plan that specifically address structural racism;
 - Advocate for, prioritize, and fund efforts that distribute and allocate resources and time toward antiracist goals and the needs of communities of color.
 - Strengthen relationships and partnerships with community-based organizations that are confronting racism.
 - Promote early and ongoing community involvement by engaging communities most impacted by racism;
 - Ensure that the County of Sonoma workforce reflects county demographics;
 - Ensure consistent collection, analysis and reporting of disaggregated demographic data;



Closing Remarks & Questions

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