



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

MAYOR JOSEPH A. CURTATONE AND THE BOARD OF HEALTH

DECLARATION OF A LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY

June 4, 2020

Somerville Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone and the Somerville Board of Health hereby declare Systemic Racism to be a Public Safety and Public Health Emergency

WHEREAS, systemic racism means the existence of institutions, laws, regulations, and social systems that have racially disparate impacts resulting in racial and ethnic inequalities;

WHEREAS, public health and public safety are shared responsibilities;

WHEREAS, public safety is the assurance of wellbeing and safety for all residents;

WHEREAS, public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of people, entire populations, and our communities;

WHEREAS, public safety is achieved by protecting and serving the entire community through fair, just, safe, and unbiased measures;

WHEREAS, public health work is achieved by promoting and protecting the health of all people and the communities where they live including but not limited to understanding and acting upon the broad range of factors that affect public health, and detecting, preventing, and responding to health threats;

WHEREAS, public safety professionals are responsible for protecting and serving the community through just, compassionate, and unbiased policing;

WHEREAS, public health efforts must seek to limit health disparities not only through the promotion of equitable and accessible healthcare but through holistic, systems-based approaches to promoting health such as food access, healthcare for all, affordable housing, education, equal opportunity employment, criminal justice reform, environmental justice, healthy transportation, and other life quality impacts;

WHEREAS, research shows that the negative impacts of policing and the criminal justice system disproportionately affect communities of color in our country;



CITY HALL • 93 HIGHLAND AVENUE • SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS 02143
(617) 625-6600 EXT. 2600 • TTY: (617) 666-0001 • FAX: (617) 776-8061
EMAIL: communications@somervillema.gov • www.somervillema.gov

WHEREAS, research shows that certain populations are at a greater risk for certain health impacts and illnesses as a result of systemic racism, which can impact an individual's access to preventative care, health education, health resources, basic resources, and other advantages, leading to disproportionate negative physical and mental health impacts.

WHEREAS, Somerville is a unique city with a deep public commitment to social justice that values its diverse population, which is dynamic and shifting over time, and despite concentrated efforts to pursue equitable policies, the data indicates that continued health disparities based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status persist here as they do nationally;

WHEREAS, communities and persons of color, especially those of lower socioeconomic status and persons with disabilities are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of their social determinants of health — health inequities stemming from economic stability, education, physical environment, food access, and access to health care systems;

WHEREAS, systemic racism causes persistent racial discrimination influencing many areas of life, including housing, education, employment, and criminal justice; and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism itself is a social determinant of health;

WHEREAS, the City of Somerville and the Cambridge Health Alliance issued The Wellbeing of Somerville Report in 2017, which documents persistent health disparities based on race and socioeconomic status;

WHEREAS, personal safety and health are fundamental needs that can impact overall quality of life and affect not only individuals but generations within a family;

WHEREAS, public health's responsibility to address racism includes reshaping our discourse and agenda so that we all actively engage in racial justice work;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Somerville will:

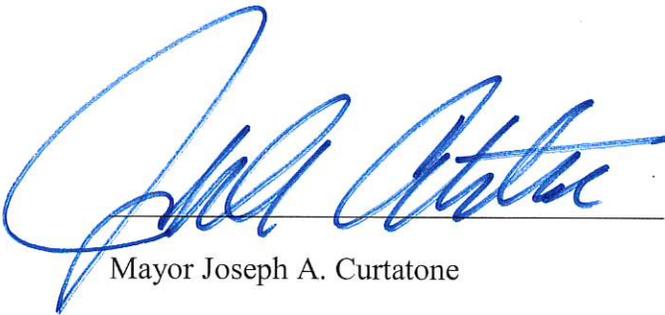
1. Assert that systemic racism is a public safety and public health emergency affecting our entire community;
2. Enable the Somerville Police Department to enhance and expedite their ongoing work to deliver just, safe, and unbiased policing in our community;
3. Deepen and expand our current investment in a multi-sector effort to eliminate the health and safety disparities created by systemic racism;

4. Advocate at the local, state, and national level for policies, laws, and regulations that improve health and safety of communities of color and advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism;

5. Continue to build productive partnerships with organizations and individuals who are leading the way in confronting and dismantling systemic racism, in all of its manifestations;

6. Pursue research, education, investment, regulation, policy development, and action in an effort to advance progress on the imperative our nation faces to address both the root causes and the destructive impacts of systemic racism.

Signed this June 4th, 2020



Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone



Douglas Kress, Board of Health