



HL17.9 Joe Cressy 周凱捷

City Councillor | Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York

June 8, 2020

Toronto Board of Health

Re: Addressing Anti-Black Racism as a Public Health Crisis in the City of Toronto

Dear Board of Health members,

Toronto is the most diverse city in the world. At the same time, anti-Black racism is a historic, pervasive, and systemic issue in our city.

Racism has numerous consequences: Black Toronto residents are more than twice as likely to be living in low-income households than residents who are not a visible minority, and 44% of Black children live in poverty, compared to 15% of non-racialized children. Black women in Ontario earn 57 cents for every dollar that a non-racialized man earns. Black people in our city experience racial profiling and anti-Black discrimination within our institutions, along with higher rates of precarious employment and unemployment, significant poverty, and overrepresentation in the criminal justice, mental health, and child welfare systems.

The intersection of race, income, housing, and other social determinants of health have placed Black Torontonians at great risk, as we are seeing through the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities with higher percentages of visible minorities. This is tragic, it is unacceptable, and it needs to change.

In order to adequately address anti-Black racism in our city, we must approach it from a public health perspective.

Recommendations:

1. The Board of Health recognize anti-Black racism as a public health crisis.
2. The Board of Health affirm its commitment to continuing to address the social determinants of health by supporting policies and programs that address the inequities that marginalized groups continue to face, with a focus on Black communities and residents, including in the following areas: employment; education; housing; child care; policing and law enforcement; the criminal justice system; and access to health and mental health services.
3. The Board of Health request the Medical Officer of Health, through the 2021 Budget process and COVID-19 recovery planning, to make recommendations to the Board of Health on re-prioritizing City of Toronto resources to address the social determinants of health, including specifically a focus on anti-Black racism.

4. The Board of Health request the Medical Officer of Health, in accordance with public health advice on physical distancing requirements and the Provincial Order that limits public gatherings, to reschedule a three-hour training session for the Board on Anti-Black Racism, Understanding Equity from Africentric Values and Principles, and Embedding Equity and Anti-Black Racism in Governance and Leadership from the TAIBU Community Health Centre and its partners, that was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to build the Board's capacity to provide equitable space for racialized and marginalized representation.
5. The Board of Health request the Chair to write to the Chair, Civic Appointment Committee, to convey the Board's desire that its membership reflect the full diversity and range of voices in our city, with particular attention to voices from Black communities, during the next recruitment of Board Members and in the event of any vacancies.

Sincerely,

Joe Cressy