



July 1, 2022

The Honorable Tim Walz

Office of the Governor

130 State Capitol

The Honorable Melissa Hortman

Speaker of the House

463 State Office Building

The Honorable Jeremy Miller

Majority Leader

Minnesota Senate Building, #3113

Cc: Senate Minority Leader Melisa Lopez Franzen and House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt

Two years ago on June 29, 2020 we released a statement calling on Minnesota, its counties, world-renowned medical schools, healthcare systems and insurance plans to declare that racism is a public health crisis. Since then, we have seen [Red Wing, Minneapolis and Bloomington City councils, Olmsted and Hennepin County Commissioners and the Minnesota House of Representatives](#) all recognize racism as a public health crisis and take steps towards broader awareness and action.

Simultaneously with these changes, we have locally witnessed the murders of Daunte Wright and Amir Locke, and have nationally observed such injustices as the reversal of Roe vs. Wade, a racist mass shooting such as that in Buffalo, and threats on gender-affirming care in Texas. Additionally, the release of the Minnesota Human Rights report in April 2022 confirmed what our communities have long told us regarding how the Minneapolis Police Department and City engage in racist practices. These are all reminders that as a nation and state, it is imperative that we still declare the harmful impacts of structural racism and white supremacy on the health of Black, Native and other currently and historically oppressed communities.



Declarations of racism as a public health crisis are an important step in truth and reconciliation with communities that have been most impacted by structural racism. **We call on the Governor's administration and the Minnesota Senate to promptly and clearly recognize:**

- **Racism's harm to the health of all Minnesotans**
- **Recognize the state's current and historical policies and practices that contribute to that harm**
- **Establish a committee on truth and reconciliation and health for all Minnesotans,**
- **Put forth policies and procedures that will stop the cycle of racial health inequity in which our state finds itself.**
- **Proactively review all policies and procedures submitted with a framework that considers impacts on racial equity and ramifications to health, implementing and moving forward only those that move our state towards equity.**

In our 2020 statement we laid out several steps we and other medical organizations would take to begin to address structural racism in health care. Since we have materially benefited through increased membership and funding since the police murder of George Floyd, it's important that we hold ourselves accountable to this work. Here is an update on where we are:

- *Engage in dialogue with communities of color and share power and resources with communities to accomplish co-created goals;*
 - **In March of 2022 we embarked on our first human-centered design health equity project focused on housing and nutritional insecurity**
- *Incorporate racial equity assessments into all decision and policy making activities;*
 - **Wrote and enacted an [Equity and AntiRacism policy](#)**
- *End contracts with organizations and vendors that tolerate racism. Diversify vendors with a priority on local organizations owned and operated by Black and Indigenous communities;*
 - **Conducts financial business with a local credit union that supports Minnesotan communities**
 - **Contracts with community members who engage in emotional labor and lived experiences of priority issues**
 - **Partnership with community organizations who engage and support community oriented and driven work**
- *Provide all employees a living wage and paid family and medical leave;*
 - **While we do not officially have employees, we have approached all colleagues and contracted providers with fair wages, flexible contracts based on family needs, and leave as needed**

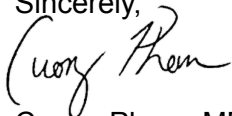


MINNESOTA DOCTORS FOR HEALTH EQUITY

- *Eliminate policies in health care systems that reduce access to care, such as refusing to accept patients insured through Medicaid or policies that delay care or appointments for low-income or uninsured patients;*
 - **Advocated for equitable access to COVID-19 vaccination from the beginning of the state's campaign**
- *Eliminate the use of race-based medicine in medical school curriculum and medical practice; and*
 - **Supported MN health systems removal of race-correction for kidney function and the University of Minnesota's Medical School establishing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion curriculum thread**
- *Support recruitment of and employ more physicians and health care providers of color and develop structures that help advance them to positions of leadership.*
 - **Diversified the makeup of our board of directors**

We believe that as medical professionals, we have a personal responsibility to call, challenge and act against racism and white supremacy, which is why we firmly state that we will continue to push our organization and others within organized medicine, public health and our local governments, toward anti-racism. There is much work that still needs to be done to ensure that MDHEQ realizes tangible change for Black, Native and other communities of color in our state. We are committed to engaging in actionable steps towards equity, antiracism and justice for communities in Minnesota. We ask that our state's government does the same so that all Minnesotans can enjoy a just and healthy existence.

Sincerely,



Cuong Pham, MD
MDHEQ President