

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 127

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 6, 2021

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably Senate Resolution No. 127.

This resolution declares racism a public health crisis in the State of New Jersey. It is widely understood that systemic racism is a driver of health inequity and is manifested in differential access by race to opportunities, resources, conditions, and power within the medical and public health systems.

Black people contend with disproportionately high death rates for chronic health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, and cancer, which racial health disparities have myriad causes, including lack of health insurance, deficiencies within the medical system, and inadequate access to health care.

Verbal and physical violence between law enforcement officers and the public is a communal violence that frequently results in injury and death. These forms of violence particularly affect black and brown communities, where these incidents are more prevalent and pervasive. The trauma of violence over the course of a person's life is associated with chronic stress, higher rates of comorbidities, and lower life expectancy, all of which increase demand on the healthcare system while at the same time sapping the strength of affected families and communities.

Studies have shown that implicit biases and internalized racism have led to black and brown people having less access to health care, preventive care, and quality education, as well as causing them to experience incarceration and mortality at higher rates.