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FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Denver Health Joins 38 Health Systems to Declare: It is Undeniable, Racism is a Public Health Crisis

Denver Health and 38 other health systems in 45 states and Washington, DC commit to addressing racism and the public health disparities caused by racism.

DENVER – Denver Health, along with health institutions that employ over a half-million employees across 45 states and Washington, DC, is committing to take action to address the impact of structural racism in the community. The [Healthcare Anchor Network](#), a national collaboration of leading health care systems, has published the [“Racism is a Public Health Crisis” statement](#) which 39 health systems have signed.

Moved by the unconscionable, unjust deaths of George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and too many others, these health systems stand together with all those who have lifted their voices in protest with a call to action.

For Denver Health and other health systems, taking action to overcome systemic racism and the health care disparities in the communities they serve includes hiring from, procuring from, and investing in their local communities. It also means tracking the progress in these efforts, and actively engaging and listening to patients and colleagues of color, modifying behaviors where needed and learning from their experiences.

“At Denver Health, we continue to fulfill our mission to provide high-quality clinical care for all, but we know the wellbeing of the people in our community is also dependent on social determinants of health such as access to housing, education, employment and the overall economic conditions where we live and work,” said Robin D. Wittenstein, CEO of Denver Health. “While we have been working to improve these conditions for our entire 160 year history, we are taking our efforts to the next level along with other health care institutions around the country.”



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Denver Health's actions include:

- Hiring and training practices designed to place people in stable employment opportunities, as exemplified through a pharmacy technician program and a partnership with Emily Griffith Technical College to manage a new café on campus.
- Buying from local businesses, especially minority- and women-owned businesses, to support the backbone of the community.
- Expanding services to help families enroll in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women's Infants and Children (WIC), and other programs they may qualify for, with the goal of helping to stabilize families and make sure children can flourish.

"Denver Health is a \$1.2 billion organization with 7,500 staff. By harnessing the power of our organization – our people, mission and financial resources – we can help transform the lives of our patients and our community and hopefully make immediate, positive and lasting change," said Wittenstein.

"Racism is a public health crisis. In Black and Indigenous communities and communities of color we see higher rates of illness and death as a result of systemic racism. We need to harness our collective strength to invest in our communities and to more intentionally hire and buy from local BIPOC communities so that all people can be healthy and thrive," said Healthcare Anchor Network Director David Zuckerman. "We all must better understand and act to change the impacts of systemic racism on social and economic conditions and health outcomes," added Zuckerman.

Investment in Black and Indigenous communities and communities of color is critical to overcoming health disparities. The HAN hospital systems also commit to implementing policy changes within their operations that promote equity and opportunity; improve primary and specialty care; help communities overcome chronic diseases; advocate for investments to improve health access, quality, and outcomes; promote and retain leaders of color; provide anti-racism and implicit bias training for all staff and administrators; and fund programming for social needs, social services and social justice.

The health care systems that have signed onto this statement are: Advocate Aurora Health, Alameda Health System, AMITA Health, Baystate Health, BJC HealthCare, Bon Secours Mercy Health, Boston Children's Hospital, Boston Medical Center, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, ChristianaCare, Cleveland Clinic, CommonSpirit Health, Cone Health, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health, Denver Health, Einstein Healthcare Network, Franciscan Missionaries Of Our Lady Health System, Gundersen Health System, Kaiser Permanente, Lurie Children's, M Health Fairview, Maimonides Medical Center, Mass General Brigham, Northwell Health, ProMedica, Providence St. Joseph Health, Rush University Medical Center, RWJBarnabas Health, San Mateo County Health, Seattle Children's, Spectrum Health, The MetroHealth



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System, Trinity Health, UC San Francisco, UMass Memorial Health, University Hospitals, University of Utah Health, VCU Health, and Yale New Haven Health.

About Denver Health

Denver Health is a comprehensive, integrated organization providing level one care for all, regardless of ability to pay.

Denver Health provides medical care to nearly one-third of Denver's population, proudly serving as the city's safety-net hospital and providing preventative, primary and acute care services.

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