



ASSOCIATION OF MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMS

June 23, 2020

We're all in.

AMCHP's mission is to lead and support programs nationally to protect and promote the optimal health of women, children, youth, families, and communities. We cannot fully achieve this goal unless we acknowledge that racism is a public health crisis and directly impacts the health outcomes of our communities and those we serve. The physical and mental health of the Black community and other communities of color related to intergenerational and chronic stress caused by individual and systemic racism is well documented. Given the recent events and collective outrage around the murder of George Floyd and others, we are reminded of how urgent this issue is for us as a country. AMCHP is committed to rolling up our sleeves with you to ensure that we are actively working to dismantle racism and bring about real change; change that we can be proud of when our work is referenced in history.

We, in AMCHP, are focused on health equity and must infuse this in all that we do. Although we've made progress, there is much more to be done. We will continue to:

- Value lived experience by engaging with, listening to, and partnering with impacted communities
- Be truthful about our history and acknowledge the role that we have played in directly or unintentionally enabling and/or supporting systems of inequity
- Be comfortable with the “un-comfortability” of having difficult conversations that challenge our thinking and stretch us in our approach to dismantling inequitable systems
- Be bold, brave, and courageous as we lead in this work
- Hold ourselves and those around us accountable as we work, and sometimes stumble, toward progress

We believe that an important part of the process of reconciliation and improvement requires a close examination of self, an admission of ignorance or error and acknowledging past actions so that we are not destined to repeat them. In that spirit, we acknowledge and regret that we have not achieved our own standards and have not always been an ally to people of color. For example, we recognize that we have used language that characterizes a racial group as “at-risk”, and “vulnerable”, as if the race of a person is the pre-determining factor, as opposed to racism. We have contributed to the invisibility of Indigenous populations of women, their children and youth, their tribes, their birth caregivers, and their histories by existing as an organization for decades and having few longstanding, historical relationships with Indigenous people or organizations. Our membership structure and events, including our annual conference, are not easily accessible for all community-based organizations and has not



appropriately prioritized the engagement of their wisdom. We have convened meetings without always thinking intentionally about the racial diversity around the table. These actions and inactions create pain and trauma for communities and have contributed to the problem. For this, we are deeply sorry. We willingly share our truths to provide clarity about our failures and to illuminate how we intend to improve and challenge those around us to do the same.

We are eager to embrace this moment in our country's history to continue to advance meaningful policy and legislation, as well as impact the hearts and minds of individuals. We are incredibly hopeful about the movement that continues to build around equity as a growing number of people, leaders, and decision makers are engaging and searching for ways to be a part of the change. Ending centuries of racism will require a commitment of will and a priority of resources on many levels to make the changes we seek.

We've seen examples of how MCH leaders are providing direction during these times by advancing policies that dismantle racism and support the inclusion of people with lived experience; examples of co-creating change with Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other communities of color. MCH leaders are beginning by looking within and supporting efforts like racial equity and implicit bias education; sharing best practices around effective community partnership and engagement; continuing to expand knowledge on the history of racism and its impact on health and well-being through reading circles and community conversations; working to assure equitable funding opportunities and distribution processes; and expanding the community of anti-racists, allies on racial disparity, and inequity. As an organization, we have strived to support these collective efforts in addition to bringing forth personal and impactful stories to further educate, drive action, and inform advocacy. However, more can be done.

Our call to action is simple. We invite all of our members, partners, and supporters to "Be all in" for dismantling racism and:

- Establish honest conversations on racism in your spheres of influence and challenge racial and implicit bias wherever it exists
- Educate yourselves, your staff and organization members on the implicit bias and the history of racism in our communities and country
- Examine current and new policies to determine its impact on equity and actively advocate against any policy or program that perpetuates inequity and racial disadvantage
- Promote life course theory to understand accumulated disadvantage and advantage and encourage efforts that support resilience and restore power to communities of color
- Engage and partner, with humility and truth, with impacted communities and local organizations to understand their strengths and the impact of past acts of racism
- Ensure funding/contractual awards, related financial processes, and decision-making are aligned with business practices that optimize inclusion, accessibility, operational transparency, accessibility, and technical/advisory supports for fair and equitable access to resources



Now is the time. We stand with those who are committed to bringing an end to structural racism. We stand for and with those who have been negatively impacted by this system and we proudly stand with you as we work to ensure optimal health for all women, children, youth, families, and communities. We are in this together. We are all in.

