



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MEL & ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Center for Rural Health

The Arizona Center for Rural Health Stands for Health Equity and Against Racism

We, the undersigned faculty and staff of the Arizona Center for Rural Health (AzCRH), state unequivocally that we stand for health equity and against racism.

Recently, communities and individuals across the country reacted with righteous outrage and grief about the death of George Floyd and other Black Americans who have been the victims of racism and police violence.

COVID-19 is a disease that has disproportionately affected Black, Latino, Indigenous, and People of Color. Racism is a root cause of the health inequities that contribute to public health crises and must be addressed.

Black, Latino, Indigenous, Immigrant and People of Color have long endured systemic and institutional oppression. We agree with the American Public Health Association [APHA Statement on Racism](#):

“Racism is a longstanding systemic structure in this country that must be dismantled, through brutally honest conversations, policy changes and practices. Racism attacks people’s physical and mental health.... We see discrimination every day in all aspects of life, including housing, education, the criminal justice system and employment. And it is amplified during this pandemic as communities of color face inequities in everything from a greater burden of COVID-19 cases to less access to testing, treatment and care.”

Addressing challenges faced by rural Arizonans - especially those who are Black, Latino, Indigenous, Immigrant and People of Color - are crucial components of research, policy, and clinical strategies that improve health equity. AzCRH connects diverse partners across Arizona, provides reliable and useful data to inform policies and programs, and assists in finding resources to support rural and underserved populations historically exploited and ignored. We pledge to expand our efforts to address race-based injustices.

AzCRH will work closely with our partners to recognize how racism contributes to health disparities in rural and underserved communities and improve how our initiatives address racial and ethnic health inequities.

AzCRH will 1) Offer our staff and faculty training and education to eliminate racism; 2) Hold sessions to discuss and reflect on issues including how racism contributes to rural and urban health inequities; 3) Assure that AzCRH leadership, diversity, and culture reflect that of the communities and populations we aim to serve; 4) Develop and implement concrete, specific, and actionable plans for improvement; and 5) Offer education, training and resources to our rural communities, stakeholders and partners through our newsletter, social media, conferences, webinars and resources. (See Resource List)

To our rural health community partners, we invite you to join us in reflecting on our actions to identify and address racism. Acknowledging and addressing racism takes many forms and requires concerted, prolonged efforts to measurably improve health outcomes and address the underlying social determinants of health that disproportionately affect Black, Latino, Indigenous, Immigrant and People of Color. At times, it means taking an active stance against a system that benefits, for example - White people or of one group - at the expense of others. To be anti-racist means honestly appraising of our own biases and committing to learning, listening, and acting to eliminate racism in our own behaviors and where we live and work.

Communities and organizations thrive when people understand, respect and act to reflect our shared values, and commit to continuously improve. We will work collaboratively to assure health equity and eliminate racism.

Signed, the Following Arizona Center for Rural Health Faculty and Staff, June 14, 2020:

Paul Akmajian
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Melissa Quezada
Rebecca Ruiz
Marc Verhougstrate
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RESOURCES: Here are resources to better understand racism in the U.S. and how to confront it:

- APHA's [Racism: The Ultimate Underlying Condition](#)
- SAMHSA's [Recovery Live: Support the Resilience of Black Men](#)
- A clear positive example to address institutional racism is to have leadership and planning teams represent the communities they serve. Here are several system actions we can take to address systemic racism: <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/16/4/606/htm>
- An Antiracist Reading List (Ibram X. Kendi on books to help America transcend its racist heritage): <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/books/review/antiracist-reading-list-ibram-x-kendi.html>
- Open letter advocating for an anti-racist public health response to demonstrations against systemic injustice occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jyfn4Wd2i6bRi12ePghMHtX3ys1b7K1A/view>
- Campaign Zero — A data-informed platform with comprehensive solutions to end police violence in America: <https://www.joincampaignzero.org/>
- Pod Save the People (“A unique take on the news, with a special focus on overlooked stories and topics that often impact people of color”): <https://crooked.com/podcast-series/pod-save-the-people/>
- Harvard Implicit Bias test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- Office of Minority Health: Cultural and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/education/behavioral-health>
- National Network to Eliminate Disparities in Behavioral Health <https://nned.net/>
- SAMHSA, Improving Cultural Competence <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK248428/>
- Stage of Cultural Identity Development: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK248422/table/ch2.t1/>