

# NALBOH

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National Association of Local Boards of Health

## *NALBOH Calls on Leaders to Acknowledge Racism as a Public Health Crisis*

The recent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, and subsequent protests continue to highlight the racism and inequities in this country. For board of health members and health department staff of color, these events highlight the marginalization and increase fear and frustration they live with each day based solely on the color of their skin. In the NALBOH community, we promise to continue doing all we can to challenge and change systems of inequity that perpetuate racism and bias within our communities. We hope that board of health members can advocate for change as elected officials, community supporters and public health advocates. The National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) calls on leaders for reform as the devastating effect of systematic racism and oppression targeting people of color in our communities continues.

Board of health members are an essential link between public health services and a healthy community. Uniquely positioned to deliver technical expertise in governance and leadership, board development, health priorities, and public health policy, NALBOH denounces racism in all forms. We have a responsibility to acknowledge racism, advocate for equitable policies and inform the public discourse. We see the horrific effects of racism in our communities every day.

NALBOH calls upon local, state and national leaders to acknowledge that racism is an ongoing problem in the United States; commit to calling for an end to racist language, practices and policies; listen to people who have experienced racism; and value and affirm the human rights of all people. NALBOH asks our members to commit locally to improving the quality of life and health of your residents; advocate for relevant policies that improve health in the Black community, and support local, state, and federal initiatives that advance social justice; and assess current and proposed local laws, ordinances, health regulations, and policies, as well as their implementation, to promote health for all within your communities.

Racism is a public health issue and local health departments and boards should play a lead role in efforts to address it. Violence or the threat of violence—driven by on-going, systematic racism—creates a toxic stress that impacts the health of children, families, and communities.