

ABCRGR Signs onto “Racism as a Public Health Crisis” Statement

Standing in solidarity in the great diversity that is our American Baptist Churches of Rochester/Genesee Region family, on July 21, 2020, the executive board of ABCRGR voted to sign on as a region to the statement by the Greater Rochester Black Agenda Group entitled “Racism as a Public Health Crisis.” Addressing the multifaceted impact of racism through employment discrimination, access to affordable health care and health resources, food deserts in urban areas, lack of affordable housing, and myriad other causes, the statement calls for awareness, education, advocacy, and sustained anti-racism action.

Signing on to this statement not only shows our region’s public stand for justice but also commits us to several actions such as assuming a leadership role in advancing anti-racism and anti-racist agendas, continuing to educate ourselves and explore our individual attitudes and actions, studying critically who we are and how we operate as a region to see where privilege may be in operation (explicitly and implicitly), and working with our networks as well as building new ones to create change.

“This issue represents a national health crisis and the numbers are startling,” says Beth Short, ABCRGR president. “Church leaders have always played a key role in lifting up matters in our communities that deserve attention. I encourage congregations to look at whether similar opportunities exist in your own communities to speak out in a Christ-centered way that elevates care for all of God's children.”

Although this particular statement is written by a Rochester-based organization, it is similar to other statements on racism as a public health crisis being adopted in cities and states across the country. In Rochester alone, several universities, corporations, and community organizations have adopted this statement. In other states, legislatures and governmental bodies have adopted similar statements. Our region board felt it was an excellent statement to make on behalf of all of our congregations nationally. Our scattered family churches are encouraged to sign on to similar statements in their own communities as well.

In early July, ABCRGR hosted a webinar on “Racism as a Public Health Crisis” with guest speakers Dr. Linda Clark, MD., and Rev. Sebrone Johnson, pastor of Greater Harvest Church. This webinar gave an excellent explanation of how racism has an impact on health locally and nationally. To view a recording of the webinar, [click here](#) or see www.abcrgr.org/events.

[Click here](#) to read the statement “Racism as a Public Health Crisis” by the Greater Rochester Black Agenda Group. This link also allows you to sign on as an individual or on behalf of an organization as well.

The Greater Rochester Black Agenda Group can be found on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/blackagendagroup>.