



**Ohio Senate
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
June 8, 2020**

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SCR 14.

UC Health is southwest Ohio's only adult academic health system. With patient care, research, and education as our foundation, UC Health is at the forefront of medicine. We are driven by our purpose to advance healing and reduce suffering, and we have a 200 year history of advocating for the most vulnerable and underserved populations in our community.

UC Health is on the front lines and witness the health disparities that exist in our community daily. Nationally, over 100,000 people have lost their lives to a new and complex virus. Millions are unemployed and experiencing food insecurity. Locally, we watched it tragically unfold with the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 in our own health system where almost 70 percent of the deaths from COVID-19 were African Americans.

And whether it's the 20 year life expectancy difference between Avondale, a predominantly African American neighborhood surrounding our University of Cincinnati Medical Center and the more affluent white neighboring area of North Avondale; or whether it's the disparities in infant mortality and Black maternal mortality, the higher mortality rates for heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer- We see this disparity everyday on our campus and in our community. Although UC Health is intimately involved in racism's impact on the health of our Black Ohioans, we know that racism impacts a wide variety of the social determinants of health including social capital, education, transportation, employment, food access, health behaviors, socioeconomic status, environmental exposure, housing, access to health services and tragically- public safety and policing.

As an institution, we recognize that racism is a reality and struggle for our employees, patients, families and communities of color. UC Health will continue its commitment to identify and eradicate inequity within our own institution and our community. We acknowledge that we are still a long way from true equality and inclusion, but believe this resolution is a critical first step.

In closing, we fully support the resolution to declare racism a public health crisis and to ask the Governor to establish a working group to promote racial equity in Ohio. We hope that this working group will develop and recommend actionable solutions to address the issues outlined above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard P. Lofgren'.

Richard P. Lofgren, MD
President and Chief Executive Officer
UC Health