



151 New Park Avenue Suite 14A
Hartford, CT 06106
info@amplifyct.org (860) 667-6388

Testimony by Marcia DuFore
On Behalf of Amplify, Inc.
Before the Public Health Committee
In Support of HB 6662 An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the
Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health
March 26, 2021

Dear Senator Mary Daugherty Abrams, Representative Jonathan Steinberg, and Members of the Public Health Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly,

My name is Marcia DuFore and I am a registered voter in the town of Suffield, Connecticut. I am testifying as Executive Director on behalf the Amplify, Inc., the Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization (RBHAO) for North Central Connecticut, member of the Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN), NAMI, and Keep the Promise Coalition (KTP).

I stand In Support of HB 6662 An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis. The bill proposes to declare racism as a public health crisis, to establish a Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health, develop a comprehensive strategic plan to eliminate health disparities and inequities across sectors, and to Incorporate health and equity into policy programs and government decision-making processes. These are welcome and lofty goals fully supported by Amplify.

Amplify is one of five Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization (RBHAO) charged by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to act as their strategic community partner for planning, education, and advocacy to address behavioral health needs and services for children and adults in North Central Connecticut.

In June and July 2020, Amplify partnered with anti-racism leaders from UConn Health Disparities Institute (HDI) and Ministerial Health Fellowship (MHF) to organize a 2-part virtual event to talk about how to address behavioral health during the dual Covid-19 and racism pandemics. Our purpose was to find ways to heal from Covid-19 and racism and bridge behavioral health gaps required to build healthy and inclusive communities. Out of those forums came recommendations to focus on a “Radical Healing” agenda with a set of principles that could be formally adopted and complementary strategies developed for moving those principles forward. A recording and summary of those forums can be found on our website at <https://amplifyct.org/publications>.

Since then many of our community partners have continued to meet and should be considered an important resource for the Commission's work. The Radical Healing Agenda we recommend seeks to align strategies and amplify collective impact in the healing process. It would increase, leverage, and coordinate investments necessary to address racial violence, and increase healing at the population level. Most recently a policy brief was authored and published by several of these partners. The policy brief lays out five principles of a Radical Healing agenda and suggests some strategies for moving that agenda forward. This policy brief and its authors should be consulted in the Commission's deliberations and recommendations. A link to the brief follows: <https://health.uconn.edu/health-disparities/wp-content/uploads/sites/53/2021/02/RADICAL-HEALING-brief-BREATH-EYES-MEMORY.pdf>

Thank you for courageously taking on the issue of racism as a public health crisis and for the opportunity to testify in support. We hope you will take our comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

Marcia DuFore