

Bill Number: HB 6662 – An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health

Members of the Appropriations Committee:

We, the physicians, collaborative providers, staff and leadership of Women's Health Connecticut, stand in support of people of color – and every woman – who faces injustice and potential harm each day. We are in full support of legislation to declare racism a public health crisis in our state and in the creation of a committee that will work toward racial equity.

As ObGyns, we see the systemic racism towards people of color in our daily lives, while treating patients. We also acknowledge the long-standing and undisputable history of prejudgment of Black Americans within the field of medicine. Consider these recent statistics from the Centers of Disease Control:

- Overall pregnancy related mortality in the U.S. stands at an average of 17.2 deaths per 100,000. That number jumps to 43.5 for Black women.
- African Americans have 2.3 times the infant mortality rate as non-Hispanic whites.
- African American infants are 3.8 times as likely to die from complications related to low birthweight as compared to non-Hispanic white infants.
- African American mothers were 2.3 times more likely than non-Hispanic white mothers to receive late or no prenatal care; 10% receive no prenatal care.

These numbers are daunting and it is our mission, training, passion and responsibility to care for each and every patient, regardless of race, color, culture, ability or circumstance. We can hope for better care and outcomes and we need your support to achieve that.

We do not want to see people in the State of Connecticut tolerate racial injustices and we support the need for immediate reforms. We vow to be active in this conversation and will use our influence to continue speaking up for women and their children – until the world is a safer, more equitable and more sympathetic place.

Thank you for your consideration in passing this important legislation.

The 270 ObGyn Providers of Women's Health Connecticut