

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Resolution HHS-20-54

A RESOLUTION ON A NEW COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS, African Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and other minority groups experience debilitating health conditions that are brought on by a lack of wholesome resources and result in quantifiable health disparities;

WHEREAS, health, both individual and community health, consists of more than physical health, other important measures including spiritual, emotional, social, economic and environmental health, and these various measures can be seen clearly to affect each other;

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization's definition of health is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity";

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators' (NBCSL) fifteen (15) policy committees focus on improving the health and well-being of African American communities by identifying the lack of resources and encouraging public policy change;

WHEREAS, African Americans encounter disproportionately higher mortality and morbidity from Heart Disease, Cancer, Stroke, Diabetes, Asthma, Infant Mortality, and Mental Illness, among many other conditions;

WHEREAS, African Americans have significantly higher rates of poverty, hazardous environmental exposure, inadequate educational resources, insufficient financial service options, fewer employment options, and a lack of financial stability and economic development;

WHEREAS, African American farmers experience higher financial turmoil due to state and federal policies, combined with insufficient private and public sector support;

WHEREAS, the lasting legacy of racial enslavement, discrimination, and bias are contributing factors to the unhealthy outcomes in African American communities;

WHEREAS, while there is no homogeneous neighborhood or clear definition of a healthy community, communities should be better defined based on comparing available resources in different areas;

WHEREAS, empirical evidence must be used to measure access to vitally needed health services, fresh fruits and vegetables, spiritual and communal support, educational services, and high-quality financial services to help distinguish a healthy community from its less healthy contemporary;

WHEREAS, this comprehensive series of studies will help define healthy communities better and propose the allocation of resources to more effectively improve the well-being of citizens that reside in every neighborhood; and

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WHEREAS, these measurements and the appropriate allocation of resources in less healthy areas can help reduce the rates of morbidity, mortality, poverty, and crime.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) will work with its partners to define "Healthy Communities" based on our fifteen (15) policy committees established under the NBCSL;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL will work with our legislators, government, and various partners to identify and inform our legislators of how various areas are "Healthy Communities" and are less healthy than their contemporaries;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL will work with our legislators, government, other partners to find resources necessary to inform our legislators of an inventory of grocery stores, hospitals, places of worship, educational resources, and various financial service organizations initially to compare neighborhoods;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL will continually reassess and help members, policymakers, governmental agencies, and the private sector identify areas that lack healthy resources;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL will work with communities to identify incentives like Opportunity Zones and others to encourage investment and resource allocation in less healthy communities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges the development and implementation of state- and community-based programs to support "Healthy Community" initiatives, to bring healthier options into underserved communities across America; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Health and Human Services Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Co-Chair: Representative David J. Mack, III (SC)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 6, 2019

Ratification is certified by: Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC), President