

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA COMMITTING TO ITS ONGOING EFFORTS IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF HEALTH CARE UTILIZATION, ACCESS, AND QUALITY; TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT POLICIES THAT PRIORITIZE THE SOCIAL EQUITY OF ALL PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE WHO ARE PERSONS OF COLOR, PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY, OLDER ADULTS, PERSONS IDENTIFYING AS LGBTQIA+, PERSONS WITH HOUSING INSECURITY, AND OTHER DISENFRANCHISED INDIVIDUALS WHOSE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND ECONOMIC STATUS ARE IN NEED OF PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION; AND TO ENSURE THAT PINELLAS COUNTY IS A PLACE OF DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, ACCEPTANCE, AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL RESIDENTS TO ACHIEVE PROSPERITY IN PHYSICAL, MENTAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND ALL OTHER DOMAINS OF HEALTH AND WELL- BEING.

WHEREAS, the state of healthcare is in a crisis, resulting in Americans, and their governments, needing to identify new ways in which we can access emergency medical, mental health, and substance use services at a time when health needs are increasing and life expectancy is decreasing; and

WHEREAS, the substance use epidemic, which includes opioid use and other addiction disorders, requires a multifaceted approach to remove financial and structural barriers to treatment, improved coordinated access into care, and the pursuit of additional funding opportunities to expand the array of local recovery resources; and

WHEREAS, other health conditions, including chronic diseases, often interact with other physical and mental illnesses resulting in an increased burden of disease but by creating fair opportunities for treatment for everyone, optimized individual and population-level health outcomes are achievable; and

WHEREAS, the Pinellas County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) identifies access to care, substance use/abuse, mental health, and social and environmental factors as the top health priorities of Pinellas County; and

WHEREAS, the goals of the Pinellas County Strategic Plan include provisions to “Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare; Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality; Practice Superior Environmental Stewardship;” and

WHEREAS, societal influences on health are commonly referred to as “Social Determinants of Health” which are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play which impact a wide range of health and quality-of-life outcomes and exposure to those conditions either promote or diminish the opportunity for healthy well-being; and

WHEREAS, the Social Determinants of Health are focused on whole health which include social and economic health, behavioral health, and physical health and are typically divided into six categories - economic stability, food security, social context, environment, education, and health care systems; and

WHEREAS, economic stability includes factors such as employment, income and debt which affect a patient's ability to access affordable healthcare services; and

WHEREAS, food insecurity includes the impacts of inadequate or uncertain access to food with either disrupted eating patterns, reduced food intake or both; and

WHEREAS, social context includes discrimination of any kind, social isolation, and a lack of community which can contribute to stress and other damaging health conditions; and

WHEREAS, environment considers living conditions, access to transportation, and the safety of the environment which influence decisions that contribute to overall health; and

WHEREAS, an education including access to quality schools and proficiency in language literacy can provide individuals a chance at upward mobility and improved skills to evaluate information about their health; and

WHEREAS, healthcare systems that provide regular access to detect and treat diseases and provide preventative health screenings are an important part of staying well and optimizing a person's ability to function physically and mentally; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Pinellas County adopted Resolution 19-53 which recognizes "the importance that local government decisions have upon the health and equity of its citizens and adopting a 'Health in All Policies' approach to county decision-making, policy development, and implementation, to ensure that projects and programs are evaluated based on health and equity implications in addition to traditional metrics," and

WHEREAS, there is a multi-departmental effort throughout Pinellas County Government to seek opportunities that advance "Health in All Policies" in order to enhance the collective prosperity of all Pinellas County residents with increased resources such as affordable housing, improved safety for drivers and pedestrians, and coordinated access into treatments for mental health and substance use conditions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that it shall be the policy of Pinellas County to progress its ongoing efforts in the improvement of health care utilization, access, and quality and to promote and support policies that prioritize the social equity of all people, especially for those who are: persons of color, persons with a disability, older adults, persons identifying as LGBTQIA+, persons with housing insecurity, and other disenfranchised individuals whose health, safety, and economic status require protection against discrimination to ensure that Pinellas County is a place of diversity, inclusion, acceptance, and opportunity for all residents to achieve prosperity in physical, mental, environmental, economic, and all other domains of health and well-being.

Commissioner Flowers offered the foregoing Resolution and moved its adoption, which was seconded by Commissioner Gerard , and upon roll call, the vote was:

7 Ayes: Justice, Long, Eggers, Flowers, Gerard, Peters, and Seel.

0 Nays: None.

Absent and not voting: None.

APPROVED AS TO FORM

By: Donald S. Crowell
Office of the County Attorney