

February 23, 2021

The Honorable Dr. Richard Pan  
Chair, Senate Health Committee  
Room 2191, State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814



**RE: Support SB 17 (Pan)**

Dear Senator Pan:

L.A. Care Health Plan – the nation’s largest public plan with over 2.3 million Medi-Cal, Cal MediConnect (Dual Eligibles), PASC- SEIU Homecare Workers, and Covered California enrollees — writes in support of SB 17, which declares that racism is a public health crisis. If passed, the bill will instruct the California Department of Public Health to address racism by working with the Health in All Policies Program, the Office of Health Equity, and other relevant departments, agencies, and stakeholders.

Although America has taken steps toward equality since its founding, racism is still prevalent throughout society. Racism negatively affects Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities in all aspects of life, creating unhealthy physical and social conditions. Racism can cause social disparities in health that can have a lifelong impact on a person’s ability to live and thrive.

Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities by promoting healthy lifestyles, researching disease and injury prevention, and detecting, preventing, and responding to infectious diseases. Correctly identifying racism as a public health crisis allows California to take steps to protect the most vulnerable from dangers that are derived from hate.

L.A. Care supports by the intent of SB 17 for legislators to pass laws with an antiracist, equity-driven focus and that dismantle racist systems. The bill rightly calls for securing adequate resources to address the crisis. The Governor is also urged to join the Legislature in the battle against racism.

The bill aligns with L.A. Care’s Equity Council, which was created to formally prioritize equity and social justice as an enterprise-wide principle. The council identifies and prioritizes actions, programs, and interventions with input from key stakeholders. The Council ensures L.A. Care is acting on the actions described in L.A. Care’s [Statement of Principles on Social Justice and Systemic Racism](#) approved by the Board of Governors in August 2020, as well as the equity and social justice issues outlined in the health plan’s three-year strategic roadmap.

SB 17 would empower the people of California to combat racism on a broader level, helping ensure that hate does not continue to harm more generations. On behalf of L.A. Care, we

thank you for addressing this very important issue. If you have any questions please contact Dr. Kyle at [JKyle@lacare.org](mailto:JKyle@lacare.org).

Sincerely,



John Baackes  
Chief Executive Officer



Dr. James Kyle  
Medical Director, Quality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



**L.A. Care**  
HEALTH PLAN®

**For All of L.A.**