A RESOLUTION supporting the King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative.

WHEREAS, major inequities in health and well-being exist for communities of color and low-income groups in King County, and

WHEREAS, a person’s health and well-being is not just the product of individual characteristics such as genetics or lifestyle choices, but is substantially influenced by social determinants, including but not limited to: income and other forms of wealth; affordable, quality housing; quality education; employment; safe neighborhoods and community recreation sites; social support; and transportation, and

WHEREAS, living in poor neighborhoods can have a direct negative impact on well-being because, for example, poor neighborhoods are often close to freeways and other sources of environmental pollutants, or streets may be unsafe and housing run down, and

WHEREAS, those living in poverty are at higher risk of poor health, including shorter life expectancy, mortality from violence, HIV/AIDS, chronic diseases such as diabetes, a lack of health insurance, obesity, and tobacco and drug use, and
WHEREAS, people of color are disproportionately represented among the poor, and
WHEREAS, a person earning $15,000–$25,000 per year is ten times less likely to have health insurance than someone earning $50,000 or more per year, and
WHEREAS, African American babies are two times more likely and Native American babies are four times more likely to die before their first birthdays than white babies, and
WHEREAS, an adult in south King County is twice as likely to smoke as an adult in east King County, and a southeast Seattle resident is four times more likely to die from diabetes than a resident of Mercer Island, and
WHEREAS, in 2006, the Board was briefed on the persistent inequities in health and well-being by race and ethnicity, income, education and place of residence, and
WHEREAS, addressing health disparities has been a priority for the Board of Health and a focus of its work since 2006, and
WHEREAS, the Board of Health played an instrumental role in the development of the Public Health Operational Master Plan (PHOMP) for King County, and the guiding principles adopted in the PHOMP specify that public health strategies shall be based on science and evidence, focused on prevention, centered on the community and driven by social justice to proactively pursue the elimination of health disparities, and
WHEREAS, in 2008, King County launched the Equity and Social Justice Initiative to take aim at long-standing and persistent local inequities and injustices;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of King County:
A. The Board of Health supports the King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative and its approaches to addressing disparities, including identifying and addressing the conditions at the root of inequities, actively seeking out and promoting decisions and policies aimed at equity, empowering communities, and raising the visibility of equity and social justice; and

B. The Board of Health requests that the department prepare a decision-making tool for the Board’s review that can be used by governments to ensure equity is intentionally considered in the development and implementation of key policies, programs and funding decisions.

C. The Board of Health encourages the King County Council to work collaboratively with Executive staff to develop and adopt a policy framework that defines
the Equity and Social Justice Initiative and provides policy direction regarding the
county’s roles and responsibilities in promoting equity and social justice in King County.

Resolution was introduced on 4/17/2008 and passed by the Board of Health on 4/17/2008, by the following vote:

Yes: 10 - Mr. Ferguson, Ms. Lambert, Ms. Patterson, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Dunn, Ms. Clark, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Hutchinson, Dr. Counts and Mr. Gossett
No: 0
Excused: 5 - Mr. Rasmussen, Ms. Frisinger, Dr. Nicola, Ms. Manning and Mr. Licata

BOARD OF HEALTH
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Board

Attachments None