

**HEALTH COMMISSION  
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
Resolution No. 21-5**

**IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNITIES OF INDIVIDUALS OF ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER DESCENT AND  
DENOUNCING RACISM AND VIOLENCE AGAINST THESE COMMUNITIES**

WHEREAS, The terms Asian and Pacific Islander refer to individuals from a wide range of countries, ethnicities, and identities. All of the different communities within the Asian or Pacific Islander labels have their own unique histories, cultures, traumas, challenges, and successes; and

WHEREAS, 20 million individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent account for 6.1 percent of the U.S. population<sup>1</sup>; and

WHEREAS, The United States has a long history of institutionalized discrimination and violence against individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent.

- In 1854, the California Supreme Court ruled that individuals of Asian descent could not testify against a white person in court, virtually guaranteeing that white people could escape punishment for violence and crime against individuals of Asian descent.
- In 1871, 17 boys and men of Asian descent were lynched in Los Angeles by a mob of white men in response to an unrelated murder of a white man.
- In 1875, Congress passed the Page Act, which was the first federal policy to restrict immigration. It banned female immigrants from East Asia due to fears that all women immigrating from China were prostitutes. The absence of women from China in the United States heavily impacted the ability of men from China in the United States to develop families.
- In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned immigration of individuals from China for 20 years and prevented those immigrants from China already in the United States from gaining citizenship.
- In 1885, 28 miners from China were killed and 79 homes housing the Chinese community were burned.
- In 1900, a bubonic plague outbreak in San Francisco was blamed on the Chinese immigrant community because the first known victim was an individual from China.
- The Immigration Act of 1924 banned immigrants from Asian countries and set quotas for immigration from the eastern hemisphere. Many individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent were deported due to this law.
- In response to Japan bombing Pearl Harbor, the United States government forced approximately 130,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry, many of whom were American citizens, to live in internment camps from 1942 until 1945. Most of those who were imprisoned lost their homes and businesses during the process. A 1983 Congressional report indicated that the internment camp policy was based on racism, rather than actual security risks concerns. In 1988, survivors received a presidential apology and \$20,000 from the United States government.
- In 1982, a male Chinese immigrant was beaten to death with a bat by two white men in Detroit, Michigan. The underlining motivation for the murder has been attributed to increasing fears that the Japanese car industry was overtaking the United States car industry at the time. The murderers were only required to participate in three years of probation, with no jail time served.
- In 1984, the Ku Klux Klan set fire to shrimping boats owned by Vietnamese immigrants due to fears of white shrimp boat owners that the Vietnamese immigrants were taking their business.
- After the attacks on the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, hate crimes against those perceived to be Muslim spiked, increasing discriminatory screening practices at airports and violence against many Middle Eastern, and South/East Asian communities.

WHEREAS, Over 2 million individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent are working on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>ii</sup>; and

WHEREAS, According to the 2018 Census Bureau, 34% of San Franciscan residents are of Asian or Pacific Islander descent; and

WHEREAS, The use of terminology and rhetoric against individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent related to COVID-19 by former President Donald Trump, other politicians, and some news media outlets, has perpetuated stigma against individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The use of rhetoric against individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent has resulted in these groups being harassed, assaulted, and scapegoated for the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States; and

WHEREAS, STOP AAPI Hate, a non-profit organization, reported that 3,800 incidents of hate and violence against individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent have occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Since January 2020, there has been a dramatic increase in reports of hate crimes and incidents against those of Asian and Pacific Islander descent; and

WHEREAS, The surge in attacks against individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent have targeted predominately elderly victims; and

WHEREAS, On January 30, 2021, an 84-year old man from Thailand died from injuries sustained during an unprovoked assault while on his routine morning walk in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, A Series of attacks occurred in Oakland's Chinatown targeting seniors of Asian and Pacific Islander descent, who were all violently shoved to the ground in separate incidents; and

WHEREAS, On Tuesday, March 16, 2021, eight people were killed at three Atlanta spas, owned by women of Asian descent, six of whom were women of Asian descent; and

WHEREAS, These murders highlight the continued racism, misogyny, violence, and sexual exploitation of women of Asian and Pacific Islander descent; and

WHEREAS, Additional attacks on individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent continue to occur in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognize that naming COVID-19 by its geographic location or linking it to a specific ethnicity perpetuates stigma<sup>iii</sup>; and

WHEREAS, Racism is considered a fundamental cause of adverse health outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color<sup>iv</sup>; and

WHEREAS, Over the last 12 months, 31% of individuals of Asian and/or Pacific Islander descent have reported being subjected to racist slurs or jokes and 26% percent of these groups have feared that someone might threaten or harm them.<sup>v</sup>

WHEREAS, Individuals from Asian and Pacific Islander descent are the least likely racial group to seek help with mental health issues<sup>vi</sup>; and

WHEREAS, To encourage development of a clinical environment which feels safe and welcoming to patients and staff who are of Asian and Pacific Islander descent, the New England Journal of Medicine offered the following suggestions<sup>vii</sup>:

- Create a welcoming safe space by displaying culturally appropriate signage, posters, and literature.
- Provide separate rooms for patients of color and anyone who makes discriminatory remarks to them.
- Create safe space for staff through equity-oriented trainings addressing Asian and Pacific Islander cultural issues.
- Provide support to staff who face discriminatory remarks or hate-related violence at work through counseling, paid sick leave, and acknowledgement of the impact of these incidents on staff.
- Ask about incidents of racism, discrimination, and other traumas while taking a patient's history.
- Consider screening for depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and adverse childhood experiences (ACES).

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The San Francisco Health Commission condemns and denounces all manifestations and expressions of racism, xenophobia, discrimination ethnic intolerance, and other rhetoric against individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, The Health Commission recognizes that every individual, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, disability status, religion, country of origin, or political party, has the right to safety and wellbeing; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, The Health Commission expresses its heartfelt solidarity with every individual of Asian and Pacific Islander descent who has been attacked, along with their families and communities, in addition to sending condolences to the family and friends of those individuals who were murdered on March 16, 2021.

FURTHER RESOLVED, The Health Commission acknowledges the impactful work by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) in regard to addressing discrimination and violence towards individuals and communities of Asian and Pacific Islander descent. The Department's outreach to these communities early in the pandemic, in an effort to provide support and education, and later testing and vaccines, has been crucial to addressing their public health needs. In addition, the DPH has provided ongoing consultation to the Mayor's Office, Board of Supervisors, San Francisco COVID-19 Command Center, and the general San Francisco community regarding COVID-19 information, including the harm of stigmatizing any individual or group during the pandemic.

I hereby certify that the Health Commission at its meeting of April 6, 2021 adopted the foregoing resolution.

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Mark Morewitz  
Executive Secretary to the San Francisco Health Commission

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST120219>

<sup>ii</sup> House of Representatives Resolution 116-908

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/reducing-stigma.html>  
<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/covid19-stigma-guide.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Williams, Lawrence, Davis (2019). Racism and Health: Evidence and Needed Research. *Annual Review of Public Health*, Volume 40: 105-125.

<sup>v</sup> Lee (2021), Combating Anti-Asian Sentiment-A Practical Guide for Clinicians. *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/asian-american-pacific-islander-communities-and-mental-health>

<sup>vii</sup> Lee (2021), Combating Anti-Asian Sentiment-A Practical Guide for Clinicians. *The New England Journal of Medicine*.