



SAHM Urges Organizations and Health Professionals to Address Racism

Oakbrook Terrace, IL – The Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM) has released a position paper, published in the August issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, strongly encouraging organizations, providers, researchers and policymakers to address the negative and pervasive consequences of racism.

“Racism is not an invisible, abstract idea. It is being felt every day by millions of people in the United States and around the world. It is vitally important as health care providers we recognize this new wave of discrimination and prejudice and proactively take steps to address the harmful effects of racism and make it clear there are tangible, helpful efforts organizations and individuals can implement immediately,” said SAHM president, Deborah Christie, PhD, FSAHM.

Racism negatively affects the self-concept, health and well-being, and life trajectories of both non-dominant racial and ethnic (NDRE) youth and youth-serving providers. In the face of growing nationalism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and overt expressions of racism, it is important organizations acknowledge the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral toll racism has on individuals and take steps to combat it.

“Racism exacts a significant toll on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. This is a proud moment for SAHM as it leads the charge in calling for system-wide responses to racism as a serious public health concern,” said co-author, Veenod L. Chulani, MD, FSAHM.

Included in the paper are a number of suggestions and steps for organizations to consider and implement.

- Organizations should consider and address racism as a form of structural violence.
- Organizations should reaffirm their commitment to justice and equity and actively develop, implement, and evaluate policies and processes to ensure that racism is not embedded systematically.
- Youth-serving organizations should explicitly convey their views against racism and create safe, welcoming spaces for all.
- Organizations should develop, implement, and evaluate interventions at all levels addressing chronic minority stress and vicarious trauma affecting non-dominant racial and ethnic providers.

- Organizations should develop, implement, and evaluate interventions at all levels addressing chronic minority stress and vicarious trauma affecting NDRE trainees and students.
- Organizations should develop, implement, and evaluate training for providers to routinely explore and address racism with all youth and effectively intervene when they identify affected youth.
- Providers caring for youth should integrate promising interventions to address racism as a part of routine evaluation and in response to identified aggression.

“We believe this landmark call to action to recognize and respond to racism is critical, especially in our present climate, where the amplified racial tensions and alarming increased rates of discrimination, bias, and hate-related violence directed against members of non-dominant racial and ethnic groups constitutes a real, urgent crisis,” said co-author, Maria Veronica Svetaz, MD, MPH, FSAHM.

To download the PDF and read the full text online, visit the [Journal of Adolescent Health website](#).

To obtain more information or to speak to an expert, contact Justin Dreyfuss at SAHM headquarters, +1-847-686-2286, jdreyfuss@adolescenthealth.org.

SAHM is a multidisciplinary organization of health professionals who are committed to advancing the health and well-being of adolescents. Through education, research, clinical services and advocacy activities, members of SAHM strive to enhance public and professional awareness of adolescent health issues among families, educators, policy makers, youth-serving organizations, students who are considering a health career, as well as other health professionals. Learn more at www.adolescenthealth.org.