



## **The UConn Rudd Center is Committed to the Fight For Health Equity and Against Systemic Racism**

The brutal murders of Mr. George Floyd, Ms. Breonna Taylor, and Mr. Ahmaud Arbery have become the most recent examples of systemic racism against Black people in the United States. The UConn Rudd Center stands in solidarity with national advocacy groups and community leaders committed to seeking social justice and denouncing race-based violence and police brutality in our society.

Systemic racism is a public health crisis in our nation and a root cause of many of the issues we study. As we've watched the COVID-19 pandemic unfold, we've seen alarming inequities in the number of infections and deaths of Black Americans. This is not by chance. Black Americans are disproportionately affected by food insecurity and inadequate access to healthy, affordable food. Black youth are exposed to more marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages than their white peers. Facing stigma for one's body weight in addition to one's skin color compounds and exacerbates the inequities Black people in the US already face. These injustices have become all too clear, and we all have a responsibility to address them.

We commit to researching policy changes that will interrupt the current cycle of social injustice and systemic racism.

Specifically, we will intentionally support people of color by working to:

- promote food security and nutrition through policies in child care centers, schools, college campuses, and food banks;
- improve access to healthy, affordable food through equity-oriented policy changes at the local level;
- improve neighborhood environments where unhealthy foods and beverages are more accessible than healthy options to Black residents;
- hold the food industry accountable for targeted marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to Black youth and communities;
- reduce the harm of intersectional stigmas including weight, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity;
- provide research training opportunities for post-doctoral fellows and students of color.

We also pledge to continue educating ourselves about ways to dismantle structural racism in the food system and stand with our colleagues and partner organizations who are fighting racial injustices every day.