

A Statement on Racism and Health Equity from Vermont's Free & Referral Clinics From VFRC Board Chair Heidi Sulis, MPH and Executive Director Steve Maier

The VFRC Board and staff recognize the pain being felt across the country from the killing of George Floyd and those before him, reject any form of racism, hate, bigotry and violence, and express our hope to be part of the solution and change that needs to occur to deal with systemic racism and oppression.

Vermont data show that people of color are suffering at greater rates from COVID-19. This pandemic has once again put a spotlight on the underlying issues in our country – that racial, societal, and economic factors have a direct impact on people's health and their ability to access health care and other resources needed to have a healthy life.

VFRC and its member clinics commit to working toward health equity and to address the racial, societal, and economic factors that influence people's health. We commit to combating systemic racism, including racism in the exam room, implicit bias, and violence against communities of color. We will provide resources for member organizations to use in staff and volunteer training and the development of anti-racist policies to ensure compassionate and culturally appropriate healthcare. We will work towards getting more resources including COVID-19 supplies to underserved communities in Vermont. Finally, we will sustain these commitments and strive to make continual improvements over time.

Along with the National Association of Free & Charitable Clinics and our community partners, we will continue to work to be agents of change, hope, and healing in a time where all three are so desperately needed.

Vermont's Free & Referral Clinics – formerly known as the Vermont Coalition of Clinics for the Uninsured – is a not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to increase access to health care for uninsured, underinsured, low-income, and underserved people throughout Vermont. Our member clinic programs value human dignity, access to quality, compassionate health care, and health equity for our patients.

OUR 9 MEMBER FREE CLINIC PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

[**Bennington Free Clinic**](#) – Bennington, VT

[**Good Neighbor Health Clinic & Red Logan Dental Clinic**](#) – White River Junction, VT

[**Health Assistance Program at the University of Vermont Medical Center**](#) – Burlington, VT

[**Health Connections at Gifford**](#) – Randolph, VT

[**Open Door Clinic**](#) – Middlebury, VT

[**People's Health & Wellness Clinic**](#) – Barre, VT

[**Rutland County Free Clinic & Dental Clinic**](#) – Rutland, VT

[**Valley Health Connections**](#) – Springfield, VT

[**Windsor Community Health Clinic at Mt. Ascutney Hospital**](#) – Windsor, VT