

COVID Reflection

HSNC 2100, Fall 2020, M. Horlyck-Romanovsky

THE POSTER

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are not being treated as if they are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights that are not being met and respected, that among these are life, liberty and the



pursuit of equality.

In this modern-day, as society is in the the thick of a global pandemic, racial injustice is more apparent than ever as communities of color are being disproportionately affected by the complications of COVID-19. Minority group communities are filled with people of color and lower socioeconomic status that are subject to a disproportionate number of hazards, including toxic waste facilities, garbage dumps, and other sources of environmental pollution. This is not on common for most low income communities and is known as Environmental Racism. This system does nothing but encourage poverty cycle and increase the divide between the classes. This system is what I was helping to fight during the initial outbreak of Covid 19.



Emissions from the toxic industries around the community as well as victims of COVID 19 inevitably aid the poverty cycle by tearing other wise heathy people away from providing for their families. Through no fault of their own, people are getting sick and being and plagued with medical bills they can not pay, furthering the condition of poverty. Citizens are being put into life long debt and must stay in these

neighborhoods or must even move into worse neighborhoods that will ultimately harm another member of their family through the same circumstances, again continuing the never ending cycle of poverty. Due to racially biased redlining, where a person lives can aid in the prediction of their health outcome. Minorities are more likely to die from lung disease, even those who do not smoke, all for living within three miles of the coal-fired power plant. Since Covid 19 affects the lungs most of all these stats are especially alarming. The higher rates of cancer,





asthma, miscarriages, low birth weight babies are no coincidence and show just the value that industry as whole places on marginalized communities and people of color directly.

Generally, even though minorities could make up 1/5 of a population in an area, it has been seen that over half of that population would be affected by COVID as pre-existing health and environmental conditions increase vulnerability. Viruses

cannot discriminate, but systems can which is why these numbers are so drastic and are direct evidence of environmental racism at work. Even Essential workers who cannot stay home live in these vulnerable communities and are affected, minority workers. Millions of farmworkers, customer service workers, and healthcare workers who are being exposed to the virus every day by working on the front lines are being subject to inadequate safeguards, limited access to medical care, and crowded living conditions.

Environmental racism is not the only Injustice minorities face that catalyst the effects covid-19 in these communities in respect to health care. My time working as a





pharmacy technician during these trying times has also shined a light on how difficult it really is for people to thrive in communities that are struggling. Many people now rely on food banks and other donations to feed their families because they cannot leave home or cannot afford groceries. Most patients already have chronic and untreated health conditions that

require ridiculously expensive medication, thanks to our sham of a healthcare system, the corporate greed of Big Pharma, and the greed of Health Care and Pharmacy lobbyists in Washington. Adding a global epidemic that is closing down the economy and removing people from their jobs helps to take away any fighting chance these minorities have. People cannot leave their homes to get to the pharmacy to pick up their medication and people cannot pay for their medication because they are not working. Those infected with the virus are also more likely to have increased complications and die due to unsafe living environments and unmanaged pre-existing conditions. Due to COVID-19 affecting the respiratory system, emissions from local industries that participate in the system of environmental racism are putting people even more at risk than they already are by just being there. This nation's experience with COVID proves evidence of a system that continues to promote de facto and de jure racism and segregation instead of aiding in the progression of equality among all people. Communities of color are faced with inadequate transportation resources, lack of access to fresh and healthy food, and exposure to polluting industries which poison air and water on top of fearing a global pandemic. The existing practices of environmental racism contribute to these



disparities an ultimately put people in a worse off condition to face this pandemic and these helpless people are continuously being put through the never ending cycle of poverty and racism.

These photos are from my work with CCMP (Coalition of Concerned Medical Professionals). I this reflections time line is from about early March to July 2020. I am a Junior at Brooklyn College studying Global Public Health. CCMP is an NGO that provides health aid, advocacy, and activism to EVERYONE, no matter race or socioeconomic status. CCMP is completely run by volunteers, all current or retired health professionals that fight relentlessly everyday for the people. I am proud to work along side these volunteers who helped me realize that this just the beginning of my career in health activism.



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