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**From:** William Tarter Jr. <wtarter@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 14, 2022 12:59 PM  
**To:** Equity  
**Subject:** Public Comment for todays CACE meeting  
**Attachments:** NAACP Statement 2.14.2022 ADAMHS - REVISED.docx

Clerk Byrd,

Please find my public comment attached for today's meeting. If possible, I ask that it be read into the record of today's meeting, if allowed by the Chair and as time permits.

Many thanks,

William Tarter, Jr.  
2nd Vice President  
Cleveland NAACP

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*William Tarter, Jr.*  
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Public Comment to CACE (2.14.2022 meeting)

Chairman Taylor and Members of the Cuyahoga County Citizens Advisory Council on Equity, I apologize for not being at today's meeting, due to a work conflict, though I look forward to watching the recording. I submit this public comment as a member of the Cleveland NAACP, not my employer.

Many of us at the Cleveland NAACP are deeply concerned by a Feb. 7 *The Land* [article](#) about the Cuyahoga County Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board "backtracking" from the stance of "Racism as a Public Health Crisis," instead using "discrimination." Our concern is shared by our fellow social justice organization, the Urban League of Greater Cleveland.

The ADAMHS Board receives millions of dollars annually in county dollars and serves principally as a funder of other mental health organizations. As acknowledged in *The Land* article, the ADAMHS Board leads by example. I feel backtracking from "racism as a public crisis" sends an incomplete message about systemic [racism](#) and adverse health outcomes, not totally encapsulated solely by "discrimination."

As Governor DeWine said in his press conference remarks on August 13, 2020: *"There are racial disparities in Ohio... certainly in health, education, housing, and we can go on and on. Sadly, in 2020, racism still exists in this country... There are disparities out there **caused by racism.**"*<sup>1</sup>

By not having a complete picture of the systemic impact of race in policy and how it has impacted community health, it becomes more difficult to address historical decision-making that continues to lead to [adverse](#) health outcomes for Black Americans in present day.

Additionally, the stance of the ADAMHS board seems to send a confusing message from that of Cuyahoga County government, which passed a [resolution](#) declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis in 2020. Several county cities passed similar resolutions. It is important to try and be on the same page in identifying the problem and clearly communicating that to residents, so that they we may come together to identify potential solutions that can overcome structural barriers facing Black citizens, as well as support the collective health of all of Cuyahoga County's residents.

While the Cleveland NAACP has reached out to the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga directly to go into our concerns in more detail, I felt it important to add this perspective to today's meeting.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this public comment and for your service to CACE.

William Tarter, Jr.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Cleveland NAACP

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<sup>1</sup> <https://youtu.be/-Yq8l3dUA9k?t=5568>, 1:32:00-1:34:30