

I want to say congratulations to Council woman Amy Drake and those who hold far right, ideologically extreme views. She and her ilk have successfully driven Dr. Bob Einterz, the former County Health officer, and now Cassy White, the former Director of the Health Equity, Epidemiology, and Data Unit out of the department. These public health officials, both experts in their field, worked tirelessly to increase the health outcomes for all county residents, and rightly focused their attention on those who were the most vulnerable and historically marginalized by taking steps to address negative social determinants of health.

This can only effectively be done by looking at public health through an equity lens, recognizing that those who are living under the weight of systemic racism, are living on low incomes, or who are housing insecure have different needs than those who are white, middleclass, have health insurance, and easy access to healthy food. You don't see or believe this because you don't have to; you are not affected by such disparities and almost certainly have not spent time with those who are so affected. This, council members, is the ultimate exercise of privilege and serves to reproduce the very inequities that you deny exist.

I'm not quite sure how to respond to people like Amy Drake who believes that "equity" is a Marxist term that is somehow committed to pushing a left-wing agenda that wants to slip CRT in through the back door and redistribute wealth.

In case you are unaware, which you seem to be, systems of power and white supremacy are real, unlike reverse racism, which is not a thing precisely because existing systems of power are deeply rooted in the history of white supremacy. As a historian, I would be happy to trace the development of this if you are interested.

Equity, understood by those who are not pushing a political ideology, understand it to be based on need, not race. For example, the expanded Narcan distribution that the council belatedly approved will mostly benefit white people in the rural sections of our county, not because they are white, but because they have the greatest need for expanded access.

I am furious and ashamed of what you are doing to the health of this county. In exercising your power, you are forcing your narrow and distorted view of equity and justice onto all of us. You claim to care about the health of this county, but you only love it to the extent that it is shaped in your image, which unfortunately excludes many of us who are not of your race, class, and privilege.