



Legislation Text

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Condemning the use of African Americans for experimentation - For the purpose of condemning the unethical use of medical experiments on African Americans.

**CITY COUNCIL OF THE
City of Annapolis**

Resolution 14-23

Introduced by: Alderwoman Finlayson

Co-sponsored by: Alds. Tierney, Schandelmeier, Pindell Charles, Savidge, Gay

A RESOLUTION concerning

Condemning the use of African Americans for experimentation

FOR the purpose of condemning the unethical use of medical experiments on African Americans.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia issued an apology on October 6, 2022, for unethical medical experiments on Holmesburg Prison inmates from the 1950s through the 1970s, and most of the inmates involved were African American; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Justice Department's Office of Justice Programs issued a report on Philadelphia's Holmesburg Prison in 1998, "Acres of Skin: Human Experiments at Holmesburg Prison," by A.M. Hornblum stating in part, "Hundreds of prisoners were used to test products from facial creams and skin moisturizers to perfumes, detergents, and anti-rash treatments. Other experiments used the inmates as test subjects for far more hazardous, even potentially lethal, substances, such as radioactive isotopes, dioxin, and chemical warfare agents."; and

WHEREAS, Millions of dollars from "many of America's leading drug and consumer-goods companies [were] made available for the doctors motivated by the desire for fame and money based on these medical experiments." The report goes on to say, "many of these doctors established their careers based on their experiments on these inmate subjects, who were isolated, cheap, and locked away from the public eye"; and

WHEREAS, One of the doctors who did research in Holmesburg Prison was dermatologist Albert Montgomery Klingman, co-inventor of Retin-A, the acne cream and wrinkle-remover, who said in a 1986 history of the University of Pennsylvania's dermatology department, "It was years before the authorities knew that I was conducting various studies on prisoner volunteers. Things were simpler then. Informed consent was unheard of. No one asked me what I was doing. It was a wonderful time," according to the Baltimore Sun (July 20, 1998); and

WHEREAS, African Americans from Annapolis and across Maryland were also used for medical experimentation at the “Maryland Hospital for the 'Negro' Insane” -- also called the Crownsville Hospital Center -- from 1911 through 2004; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, Capital Gazette newspaper correspondent Tom Marquardt wrote "...at its worst, the [Crownsville Hospital Center] story testifies to how African-Americans who were sick or mentally ill were abandoned or used for experimental research that modern medical professionals would find repulsive"; and

WHEREAS, The hospital's 1948 annual report stated 103 patients were subjected to insulin shock treatments for epilepsy, 33 lobotomies were performed, 56 patients were injected with malaria, and in 1963 the hospital reported children were being injected with hepatitis; and

WHEREAS, We must all accept and learn from this extraordinarily painful history of the United States, the State of Maryland, Anne Arundel County and the City of Annapolis; and

WHEREAS, The result of these past practices continues to affect the descendants of African Americans throughout our country negatively; and

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL that the Mayor and City Council hereby pledge to continue to pursue a path toward a “One Annapolis” where we listen and treat one another with respect, civility, and dignity;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL that the Mayor and City Council apologize for medical experiments that exploited a vulnerable population and for the impact that medical racism has had on generations of African Americans from the City of Annapolis.