



## *Racial Injustice & Inequities Perspective*

# Coronavirus and Inequity: Why the Shock?

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These times are an unnecessary reminder of the need to care for one another as humans and the repercussions of not doing so. I remain dumbfounded at the suggestion that the coronavirus epidemic has “laid bare” the inequities in this country. Those inequities were entirely clear decades and centuries ago.

I’m not even sure what bothers me most these days. Is it that every day I’m on service I take care of one or more people who have been shot? Is it that 100,000 people have died in just three months from a pandemic that the federal government pretended wouldn’t happen but could have done so much more about? Is it that my Venezuelan wife and children endure racist slurs and mistreatment nearly every single day for speaking Spanish and looking ever so slightly different, even though they are fluent in English and the American “culture”?

And, regarding culture, maybe what bothers me the most is the realization that some Americans simply do not value all human lives equally. This is downright embarrassing. It is stupid. It is ignorant. And it is wrong.

So, as COVID-19 cases mount in our Milwaukee, I would point out that the pandemic is not our only problem. African Americans in some neighborhoods live up to twenty fewer years than others just miles away. As of May 31, 2020, the [number of homicides](#) in Milwaukee is 62, up from just 33 on this date last year. We have zip codes with some of the highest incarceration rates in the nation. And [our infant mortality rates](#), a key [benchmark](#) of societal health, are consistently among the [worst in the nation](#).

Our city, state, and nation are failing their citizens. It is at this point in history that, really, we have no choice but to do better. I pray we do, because the cost of human life that these United States have endured since before even the Revolution might finally be too much to bear.

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