

A Statement on Racial Injustice and Recent Events

June 9, 2020

As our nation is currently dealing with an unprecedented mix of significant health, social and financial issues, we want to reach out to the patients and their loved ones who have been participating in our research program. We will continue to update the website as events unfold.

Racial Injustice

Our nation mourns the tragic and senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the countless other black individuals who have lost their lives to police brutality and institutional racism. It is a vivid reminder of the ongoing racial inequalities and unacceptable indignities that so many of our citizens constantly endure. These events should lead everyone to recognize how much more work our society must do to attain liberty and justice for all. As a nation, we have considerable work to do.

Our hearts are filled with sadness for this senseless loss of life. We acknowledge that Penn, like many institutions, has its own troubled history of racial discrimination which underscores the importance of Penn's commitment to doing our part to create a more inclusive and mutually respectful environment and society, free from discrimination and deprivation. This applies to patients receiving clinical care, as well as to those persons who participate in research studies. We are prepared to make any changes necessary to support those in our community, and we strive to always change, grow and learn from our past and from others. By doing this we hope to create a space that welcomes and protects those in our society who are too often ignored or mistreated.

COVID-19

During this acute COVID-19 period, when we resume patient-oriented research, assessments will be conducted remotely when possible (such as via video/telephone, or through mailed/e-mailed self-reported assessments), with research staff also working remotely to the extent possible. When in-person assessments are conducted, we will utilize home visits when possible, and for all in-person visits we will follow University of Pennsylvania and Perelman School of Medicine guidance, including applying the principles listed below:

1. Clinical research programs planning to see participants in person will follow University of Pennsylvania Health System recommendations for patient care and require, at a minimum, a surgical face mask and eye protection.
2. All faculty and staff who need to work on site will have completed the Resumption of Research Training from Penn-Environmental Health & Radiation Safety before arriving on site.
3. We are keeping staffing and participant density on the floors at any given time at 20% of capacity, and maintaining social distancing (6 feet).
4. We will conduct temperature screening, keeping documentation of the name of the person, their temperature and the time at which it was taken. This will help us track both temperature and density of population in the office space.
5. Follow established building protocols for elevator and stair use.
6. Hand sanitizing stations are placed throughout Penn clinics, and each employee will practice proper hand hygiene through frequent hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer.