

The leadership and members of the DOM are deeply saddened and distressed by the tragic deaths of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and countless others before them. We stand in solidarity with members of our local, national and global community against police brutality and racism in all its forms.

As health care workers, we share many common values; one of the most important is that each person should have the same access to excellent health care, and have the same expectation of enjoying long, healthy lives, regardless of the color of their skin. Violence of all kinds, including between those who are charged with protecting our communities and those who live in these communities, is a critical determinant of health, even more so in communities of color where these incidents are frequent and can be lethal. As physicians, researchers, staff and trainees in the Department of Medicine, we are committed to contributing to strategies to dismantle systemic racism, to equalize the social determinants of health, and to create a more just and equitable society. These principles will continue to guide and center our work.

The Department of Medicine is committed to shattering the silence that prevents us from acknowledging the pain and grief that many members of our community are experiencing. We commit to create safe spaces for all members of our department to process what has happened to all of us through the recent tragic events and to discuss how we might move forward as a community.

We also commit to forming the partnerships with local communities, government and other institutions to move from rhetoric to action, to achieve our collective goal of dismantling structural racism. We will redouble our efforts to enhance diversity and inclusion throughout our department, which have been and will continue to be core values of this department. Most of all, I want to assure that you that the full weight of our Department – our leadership and our resources – are here to support all of you during these difficult times. Please know that you can reach out to anyone on our leadership team for support.

Many members of our department will participate in the White Coats for Black Lives national kneel for 10 min in remembrance of George Floyd on Friday, June 5, at 1 pm and in the Penn Cares march from HUP to City Hall which will begin shortly thereafter. More details of the march are forthcoming. I will be there to proudly show my solidarity with you and with our community. I look forward to continuing to listen and to support all of us – and most importantly, to taking positive action toward our shared goal of a truly equitable society, in which all members feel safe, included, valued and with the expectation of health and well-being for all.