

Dear DFMCH Team,

We are filled with anguish over the atrocities of violence and racism in America. The killing of African Americans and the unrelenting discrimination that pervades our society have caused centuries of suffering, death, illness, poverty, and hardship. We are outraged and committed to not only calling out and confronting these issues, but to helping our Department take action against them. To that end, today we sought guidance and input from our Department's Anti-Racism Task Force on the recent events and how to address them within our Department. We deeply appreciate the opportunity to listen to the individuals who joined the conversation. Subsequently, the Task Force created the following statement, which we believe is important to communicate to the entire Department:

*We are writing in light of recent incidents-- including the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Tony McDade among many others-- that are weighing heavily on our community. Though for many, the sequence of events over the past week has felt particularly heavy, we acknowledge that these issues are not new; these are the lived experiences of our Black coworkers and patients every day. As with the COVID-19 pandemic, these events cast a bright light on the pre-existing inequities within our society. However, systemic racism, White supremacy, and police brutality are public health crises that have threatened the lives of Black people for centuries, rather than weeks.*

*As the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health (DFMCH), we emphatically denounce these heinous acts. But we must go further. In a time like this, silence is unacceptable--ignorance even worse. We must take steps to actively dismantle the structures that perpetuate racism within our institution and the broader community. As such, we have outlined the following preliminary steps, in collaboration with the department's Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF):*

- Employee engagement: Hold a DFMCH-wide Town Hall meeting to discuss racism, White Supremacy, and other forms of elitism and how to combat them within the Department; engage all members of the Department in establishing an Equity Agenda with measurable and accountable goals.*
- Education: Implement training for all members of the DFMCH on the history of race relations in West Philadelphia, anti-racism, and allyship*
- Patient Care: Eliminate practices that result in race-based disparities in patient experiences*
- Service: Partner with community organizations to combat policies, such as the cash bail system, which perpetuates violence against people of color in our neighborhoods; create opportunities for medical professionals and community members to interact outside of the formal healthcare setting*

- *Research: Increase transparency in our department's performance on racial health disparities for primary care metrics; strengthen reporting systems for microaggressions in the workplace*

*These initial steps are by no means exhaustive. We explicitly invite every member of the department to join the Anti-Racism Task Force, expand the agenda, and collaborate to effect change.*

We fully endorse the Task Force's statement and will collaborate with them to carry out the action items listed. In particular, we want to highlight the invitation for anyone in the Department to join the Anti-Racism Task Force. You can email any of us or Dr. Renee Betancourt or Dr. Ayiti-Carmel Maharaj-Best for more information.

Anti-racism, social justice, and equity are central values of our Department. We are committed to championing these values and doing more to embody them in the work we do.

--Matt, Joe, and Marcie