



June 4, 2020

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We're privileged to be part of the medical and scientific professions, to be working in an incredible medical center, and to have each other as friends and colleagues. But privilege is coupled with responsibility.

As professionals focused on treating and understanding human health and disease, it's our responsibility to recognize and attempt to alleviate the drivers that result in health disparities. The race-based distribution and impact of Covid-19 and the recent killings of George Floyd, Atatiana Jefferson, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and Eric Garner have magnified the health disparities that are rooted in racism and socioeconomics in our country.

We're currently witnessing one of the most widespread, nationwide civil rights protests in our country's history – all during a historic pandemic that we know is disproportionately affecting racial and ethnic minorities. Medical societies such as the [AMA](#) and [AAMC](#) are rightly calling for the acknowledgement of racism and police brutality as a public health crisis.

During this time of uncertainty, we must be reminded of our values in the Department of Medicine:

- We value diverse voices among all of our faculty, staff and trainees, and we embrace an individual's right to be heard regardless of race, color, social class, status, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, or religious belief.
- We strive to promote cultural competency throughout the department and recognize that diversity makes us stronger, more accomplished, ultimately enhancing the collective impact of our work.
- We encourage our trainees and faculty to find ways to reduce health disparities and advance research that impacts underrepresented populations.
- These values reflect who we are as clinicians, educators, and investigators, allowing us to build meaningful bridges with our surrounding community, and fulfill our mission dedicated to patient care, education, and research.

As your chair, I assure you that we will continue to work together to promote and protect our culture and values that uphold equity, diversity, and justice for all members of our department, as well as the community we serve.

Please continue to reach out, share your thoughts, and support each other.

With my best regards and wishes,

David A. Schwartz, MD

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