

We, [the Texas Medical Schools Diversity and Inclusion Consortium](#), are deeply saddened by the violence that erupted in Minneapolis following the tragic death of George Floyd while in police custody. It strikes a chord especially since a similar incident took place in Dallas last year, when an off-duty officer mistook Botham Jean for a burglar and fired two shots while he was watching TV and eating ice cream in his own apartment.

We condemn this violence and, in particular, its devastating effect on the neighborhoods where protests ensued. Further, we join those who are endorsing the urgency of a full and independent investigation of the circumstances surrounding Mr. Floyd's death. It is essential that citizens across the nation have trust and confidence in professional and fair treatment by the police.

We also recognize, and must acknowledge, the frustration felt in communities across this country, born of continuing racial and ethnic disparities in education, employment, health, and the justice system. There is no excuse for overuse of power and authority that is seen in the United States but we must be willing to confront the social problems in our country--we have ignored too long.

As the COVID-19 story began to unfold, it became clear that the human spirit would be pushed to its limits. The pandemic has exposed profound inequities in basic needs including health care. The devastation it has caused among our Black and brown communities along with impact of social distancing has isolated all of us including our students, trainees, staff and faculty. To our African American and Black members of our learning communities, last week's events were a triggering and unpleasant reminder of how easily one can lose their life because of the color of their skin.

As the events of the past week remind us, there is more to do. Together we can build an inclusive environment that recognizes and respects people of all backgrounds and experiences. We remain committed to that and hope you will do what you can to eliminate racism, sexism, and other negative influences on our progression as a nation. Now more than ever, we must support one another by practicing allyship. If one of us hurts, we all hurt. Perhaps academic medicine can be that positive influence on lives beyond the delivery of health care services. Perhaps here we can create a way forward.

Writer and activist James Baldwin once said, "From my point of view, no label, no slogan, no party, no skin color, and indeed no religion is more important than the human being." We must fight for all of our fellow human beings in any and all capacities.

In solidarity,

Texas Medical Schools Diversity and Inclusion Consortium