Dear Einstein Community:

On Sunday, I wrote to the entire Einstein community about the killing of George Floyd. Today, I want to add these thoughts: What we’re now experiencing in America goes well beyond George Floyd’s murder. It’s also about the killings of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, and a painfully long list of names of Black American men, women and children that stretches back decades and centuries. The pain and trauma caused by racism in all its institutional forms and individual manifestations has damaged and destroyed the lives of Black Americans and other people of color for far too long.

We understand that many of our students, faculty, and staff are directly impacted and harmed by these hateful acts. I urge everyone in our community to share their concern for and provide support to those on our campus who are feeling threatened, disheartened, and angered by the endless injustices experienced by African Americans throughout our nation.

Most of us cannot directly experience the pain of those in our minority communities; however, we must harness our outrage to be part of the solution. As a result, Einstein and I pledge to do more.

Such action is needed because we witness the consequences of racism every day in the economic hardship, social burdens, and health disparities of those living in our local community—the poorest county in America. We know well that caring for the health of our citizens doesn’t stop at the hospital and clinic doors; indeed, the most important determinants of health are social, and are undermined by disparities. We must also address the root causes of these disparities and train the next generation of physicians to be both great doctors and advocates for change.
So the question is: What are we—the Einstein community—going to do about it.

Tomorrow, Dr. Nerys Benfield, Einstein’s Senior Associate Dean for Diversity & Inclusion, will detail a series of actions that the College of Medicine is taking to solicit opinions and continue our work to address these issues. One goal, according to Dr. Benfield’s note, is to support engagement in “transformative anti-racist efforts.”

I strongly encourage everyone to participate in the activities that Dr. Benfield will describe as we all work together to keep our community safe and strong, while continuing our efforts to make diversity and inclusion a priority. Such endeavors support Einstein’s long history of promoting social justice. We recognize that the time has long passed where we can tolerate the behavior of those who witness racism but do nothing when action is desperately needed.

We must invest in programs and training that make a difference. While we are already doing much of this work, there is little doubt that we can and should do more.

Ultimately, I believe that we will succeed—because of my faith in Einstein and in all of you.

Sincerely,

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