

To the UW Medicine Community:

We write to express our outrage and sorrow over the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, Manuel Ellis, Breonna Taylor and most recently George Floyd as well as the systemic racism that Black people continue to experience. We recognize that we must act to identify and eliminate the racist policies and behaviors that our Black colleagues experience in our learning environment and workplaces.

Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion is longstanding, but the pace of change has been too slow. Through protests here in Seattle and throughout the country, we hear the voices of Black people who are rightfully angry and exhausted from the lack of progress and the injustices that threaten their physical and emotional well-being.

We recognize that change starts within each of us. Today, we commit to identifying policies within UW Medicine that perpetuate structural racism. We will begin to dismantle and replace them as we strive to become a truly anti-racist organization. A first step is active and respectful listening to those who have been oppressed in our current environment. Collectively and individually, we must consider how to create the healthy, equitable and inclusive community that we desire. This week, we heard from the [UW health sciences community](#), and we will have further conversations over the coming weeks that will guide our work to establish anti-racism as a core value of UW Medicine.

We are committed to making UW Medicine a place where our Black students, trainees, staff and faculty can advance and thrive in their careers. We will establish more effective and required anti-racism training for members of our community and improve our support for professional development of a diverse leadership team. We will also strive to develop better metrics related to our equity, diversity and inclusion goals that will hold us accountable.

The launching of the new [UW Medicine Office of Healthcare Equity](#) on July 1 provides an opportunity to define short-term and long-term goals. We are very enthusiastic about the appointment of Paula Houston, Ed.D., as UW Medicine's first Chief Equity Officer to lead this critical work. As we engage in active listening, we ask that you provide input as the goals for UW Medicine's plans are developed.

Finally, we will make our voices heard. One example is the event that will begin at Harborview Medical Center at 9 a.m. on Saturday, June 6, in support of the [call to action](#)

from two members of UW Medicine, Dr. Estell Williams and Edwin Lindo. This event is focused on recommendations from the American Public Health Association that are intended to address law enforcement violence and inequities in our criminal justice system as [public health issues](#). The march on Saturday will be peaceful, and we want to remind our healthcare community that with COVID-19 still a concern, participants should self-attest that they do not have active symptoms of COVID-19 and practice safe measures by wearing a mask and maintaining 6 feet of physical distancing.

At this difficult time in our nation's history, we believe that establishing anti-racism as a core value for UW Medicine is required to advance UW Medicine's mission of improving health for all people.

Sincerely,

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