

**June 19, 2020**

**TO:** Faculty, Staff, and Students of the University of Kansas School of Health Professions

**FROM:** The University of Kansas School of Health Professions Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

**RE: The University of Kansas School of Health Professions Statement on Systemic Racism**

We in the University of Kansas School of Health Professions and as healthcare providers who believe and strive to live the ethical principles that we committed to upholding upon joining the profession, and as educators dedicated to the health and well-being of our learners and the communities we serve, and as scientists who are engaged in improving human existence, we stand in solidarity with trainees, colleagues and all persons of color who face systemic injustices.

Amid this COVID-19 pandemic, we have been faced with the tragic deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, George Floyd, and countless other irreplaceable lives at the hands of police officers exposing the racial injustice experienced by Black/African American communities. These repeated traumatic incidences have brought to the world's attention the range of systemic racial disparities that still exist in our society today. As an academic medical center, we have witnessed the socioeconomic and healthcare inequities firsthand as we have seen poor healthcare outcomes with disproportionate effects on people of color. Once again, this uncovers the devastating impact on marginalized communities and it is time for us to place action behind our words.

In recent weeks, the KU Medical Center community has been engaged in meaningful community conversations addressing traumas in the Black/African American community while discussing plans to strategize, organize and mobilize our efforts towards implementing permanent, lasting change. We have witnessed the raw, intense pain of our faculty, staff and learners who have experienced trauma and continue to live with this daily. We remain steadfast in our commitment to serve our faculty, staff, students, and community citizens while ensuring the safety and well-being for each individual that calls KU Medical Center "home." Our school stands in solidarity with other members within the KU Medical Center community seeking solutions to make a collaborative effort in support of racial justice, equality, and civility.

It is our school's commitment to serve the citizens of Kansas, the region, and the nation while developing tomorrow's leaders through exemplary education, innovative research and community service. We have never departed from our mission and the School of Health Professions will continue to lead with action towards change. We strive to move towards the acknowledgement of structural racism and anti-racism within healthcare education through ongoing training (e.g. Unconscious Bias), further resource development, and integration of cultural competency into program curricula. Additionally, the scheduling of moderated discussion forums is currently underway to provide SHP program learners the opportunity to share their experiences, thoughts, or ideas regarding racial bias and discrimination.

We are proud of our students, faculty, and staff who stand up to these injustices. When each of us chose careers as healthcare providers, educators, and scientists, we also accepted the inherent roles as entrusted community leaders and humanitarians intrinsic to such career paths. While these roles come with recognition and respect, they also come with great responsibility. In this capacity, it is our professional obligation to advocate for social justice, to work toward the goal of health equity, and to address deep rooted sources of disparities in health outcomes.

In continued support of the efforts of many who have contributed to the school-wide efforts for diversity, equity, and inclusion, the School of Health Professions Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is calling upon SHP faculty, staff, and students to hold ourselves and each other accountable in representing our shared values of diversity and inclusivity. Now more than ever, it is essential for us to take a stance for social justice and equity regardless of color, creed, sexual preference, gender, or disability. It is our hope that our community of current and emerging healthcare professionals represent the sanctity of hope for a world that stands for social justice, celebrates diversity, promotes inclusivity, fights against any form of inequity, embodies civility, and advocates for systemic change. One person does not create a system...it takes more than one person to create a system. We need each other to work together for together we are stronger and together unconditional love overcomes hate.

Find more information, resources, reports and ways to get involved here:

- [ASAHP statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)
  - *Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions statement promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion with guiding values and beliefs for the improvement of the quality of allied health education, the healthcare workforce, patient care and the health of society.*
- [W. K. Kellogg Foundation's America Healing initiative: Racial Equity Resource Guide](#)
  - *Racial Equity Resource Guide: Comprehensive and interactive racial equity resource guide including articles, books, organizations, and training curricula aimed at helping organizations achieve healing and equity in their communities.*
- [The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights Report: New Era of Public Safety: An Advocacy Toolkit for Fair, Safe and Effective Community Policing](#)
  - *A resource for increasing trust, fairness, justice, and mutual respect between police departments and the communities they serve. The toolkit offers community-centered policy solutions to equip police departments and communities with safe yet effective best practices.*

Respectfully,

Dana Bostic, Chair; Jane Hughes, Member; Bobbie Laincz, Member; and Karen Schell, Ex-Officio.  
School of Health Professions Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee