



June 10, 2020

Dear UofSCSOMG Students,

On behalf of the Student Advocates for Diversity, Inclusion, & Equity (SADIE) and the UofSC School of Medicine Greenville Chapter of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA), we are writing to acknowledge the series of tragic events that have targeted African American communities in our nation. As the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis upend everything around us, we are once again bearing witness to the deadly impact of persistent racial inequities and injustice for black Americans manifesting on multiple fronts: within healthcare, in the criminal justice system, and in everyday life. George Floyd's life was taken underneath the knee of Minneapolis police officers on May 25th, Ahmaud Arbery was murdered by vigilantes while jogging on February 23rd, and Breonna Taylor, an EMT, was gunned down in her home by officers during an unwarranted search on March 13th. These recent events and countless others draw attention to ongoing issues of racial profiling and excessive use of force by law enforcement officers against black Americans. The grief in our community is exacerbated by frequent, public experiences of racism while completing mundane activities. Take for example, Christian Cooper, a black male who was peacefully bird watching in Central Park when he was threatened by a white woman who called the police for no legitimate reason. We would like to challenge the notion that these are isolated, single events in history. These tragedies are the consequences of a nation impacted by a history of targeted injustices and an ongoing legacy of systemic racism. The deep pain elicited by all of these deaths along with those that go unwitnessed are only compounded by the disproportionate suffering experienced by communities of color during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We realize some colleagues in our UofSC Greenville community are disproportionately affected, grieving, and threatened by this violence. Many of us are also deeply affected through our shared humanity or feel helpless seeing our friends and colleagues suffer. This is a time for us to reach out to one another, a time for solidarity, and a call to action! We can actively resist racism and hatred in all its forms by engaging in courageous conversations with our friends, families, and loved ones. We can actively resist by supporting anti-racist efforts and serving as advocates for change. It is also time for us as future physicians to think of innovative ways we can apply our valuable education to contribute to narrowing health inequities. Regardless of our outward identities, as future physicians, we have a shared responsibility and a role to play in addressing systemic racism in order to better serve our patients.

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We would like to thank Dr. Marjorie Jenkins and President Bob Caslen for their acknowledgement of these horrific events, their call to action for health equity, and their recognition of the role of the healthcare profession in mitigating racism as a social determinant of health.

To further explore the significance of race in America, we would like to recommend a “Talks with Google” session from New York Times bestselling author, Ijeoma Oluo. You can access her talk here: [Ijeoma Oluo: “So You Want to Talk About Race”](#)

We are here for all of you. We encourage you to reach out to the Office of Student and Academic Affairs and representatives of SADIE or SNMA with your concerns and ideas for change. We deeply care, and we remain committed to our mission to create a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for students and faculty to rally around these important issues. We plan to provide more resources and opportunities to engage in the future, and we hope that you will join us.

In Solidarity,

SADIE Representatives & Committee Members

Keiko Cooley, MS4
Victoria Dillard, MS4
Dillon Isaac, MS4
Aaliyah Keels, MS4
Samantha Shellhoss, MS4
Michael Bell, MS3
Debby Lee, MS3
Betlihem Ayalew, MS2
Joel Burt-Miller, MS2

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