

June 4, 2020

Dear American Physician Scientists Association Family,

We write to you today with broken hearts as Black communities continue to be the subject of systemic racism and police brutality. We mourn the losses of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and countless others.

As physician-scientist trainees, we have the unique privileges of caring for the wellbeing of patients while aiming to combat health concerns plaguing society through investigative research. These privileges confer the dual responsibilities of creating a safe and compassionate space that promotes healing and ensuring the representation of diverse voices in scientific research. It is not enough to passively condemn the brutality that we witness. We must also actively oppose the social injustices that make life unsafe for the patients we serve. Racism is a public health crisis and we are committed to working internally as well as cooperatively with our partner organizations to promote anti-racist behavior and foster a culture of diversity and inclusion within our profession and society as a whole.

To our Black, Brown, African American, and multiracial members – know that you are heard, seen, and valued. Your professional community stands with you in rage and sadness at the loss of life and the inequities that continue to erode our society.

The current COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately affected communities of color, has shed a light on the far-reaching effects of systemic racism, race-based health inequities built into our societal structure, and the profound impact they have on health and wellbeing. Please know that as an organization APSA stands opposed to racism in all its forms. We recognize that many health disparities are a product of racist policies and actions and have often been propagated by representatives from our own field. Many in our community have also been addressing the virulent pathogen of racism and its legacy in medical institutions. As an organization we would like to highlight this work - addressing race-based medicine and highlight the effort of those facilitating anti-racism curricula in medical education:

1. [Curriculum for Incoming Medical Students](#)
2. [List of Anti-Racism Resources](#)
3. [Institute for Healing and Justice in Medicine](#)

APSA remains committed to demonstrating the value we place on all members of all races, ethnicities, and communities. As a community of physician-scientist trainees, we are facing uncertain times. All of us have confronted challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of us are navigating examinations, applications, and varied responsibilities in clinical training. APSA is here to support your training throughout this time and continue to advocate on the national level for clear communication, expectations, and resources for all our members to navigate these obstacles. APSA promises to continue creating an uplifting community, supporting the diversification of our physician-scientist pipeline, and utilizing our platform as the largest body of future physician-scientists to abolish racism within our institutions. We renewed our commitment to these initiatives at our Physician Scientist Trainee Diversity Summit in 2019, which helped us to collaboratively develop tangible action plans to effect change. Our Diversity Committee has perpetuated this commitment as they continue to

develop new methods of outreach and inclusion, including specific virtual content like the session Combating Impostor Syndrome as a Diverse Physician-Scientist Trainee and the Mini Lessons from Medical Scientists initiative. We hope that these resources might be a small way each of us can improve the health and safety of the communities we hope to treat.

In addition, we vow to continue supporting diversity in physician-scientist training in the following ways:

1. Ensuring representation from at least one person of color as a speaker at all APSA regional and annual meetings and using those events to amplify the voices of black, multiracial, indigenous, and people of color.
2. Supporting our undergraduate mentorship program, which provides access to support and resources to undergraduate communities. Specifically, we are recruiting mentees from underrepresented communities such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) as well as organizations that support STEM recruitment of individuals from underrepresented minorities.
3. Seeking to establish new local chapters and hold APSA-sponsored events at HBCUs and HSIs.
4. Developing a plan to deliver relevant virtual content and increase access to career development resources for trainees, such as the Mini Lessons from a Medical Scientist Initiative.
5. Demanding equal opportunities for people of color to serve as speakers and panelists and advocating for our partner organizations to do the same.
6. Advocating for research that addresses the underrepresentation of minorities in the physician-scientist community and the effect of racism on the training pipeline.
7. Urging all APSA members to speak out against racist behavior at their own institutions and advocate for change at a local level.
8. Donating all proceeds for the next year from AmazonSmile purchases benefitting APSA to non-profit organizations that directly support Black communities.

We stand in solidarity with Black communities during this difficult time and vehemently oppose the unchecked persistence of systemic racism. As an organization, we recognize the need for systemic change and pledge to challenge the status quo by continuing to speak out against injustice, promote equity in healthcare and research, and champion our diverse colleagues throughout the physician-scientist pipeline. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have suggestions on how we can better support you or would like to be involved with any of our current efforts.

Sincerely,  
APSA Executive Council & Committees