

STANCES ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Building the community our children deserve

As a community, we share the sadness and outrage of the people of Minneapolis as the city responds to the senseless death of one of its African-American citizens, George Floyd, during an encounter with police. The circumstance has become all too familiar and calls to mind similar events and reactions around the country, including in our own Milwaukee and Wisconsin communities.

Like so many cities, Milwaukee struggles with and suffers from deep racial disparity and injustice. As a community of caregivers, we at Children's know the devastating effects that inequity has on the health and well-being of children. Our experience responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has only further highlighted how people of color disproportionately bear the effects of centuries-long discrimination.

Children's has a role to play in creating a call to action: we must create a better world so our children can grow up healthy. Our Inclusion, Diversity and Equity team is furthering this work, building on our longstanding commitment to support all children.

We do not tolerate discrimination in our workplace. We cannot allow racism anywhere in our society – and we must speak out and actively work against it. Our children deserve to live in a community that is not only safe, but that also embraces and supports all individuals, regardless of where they live or how they look. We must work together to build that community for them.

Peggy Troy
CEO, Children's Wisconsin





Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin

June 1 ·

An Important Message to Our Community

The events of the past few weeks have been heartbreaking.

Froedtert Health condemns all acts of racial discrimination and calls for systemic change within our community. Only by working together will we be able to make meaningful change.

As health care professionals, it is especially difficult to experience ourselves or witness other people in pain and in need of help. While racial injustices are not new, recent events have pushed the issues of racial disparity into the open. This includes the tragic death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer. This, coupled with the pressures of managing a pandemic, has heightened the stress and emotional sensitivity of everyone who serves our community.

Encouraged by the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends,” we must make a statement and share some reflections about the recent events that have taken place across the country. Many of these events carry remnants of what has taken place in our local community in the not-so-distant past. In this case, the enemy we face is racism, recurring trauma, violence and disregard for human dignity and respect.

At its core, our job is to care for people. In this work, we are often treating people affected by symptoms caused by racism, trauma and violence. We see the impact of disparity on health outcomes. Furthermore, the stress from these events is linked to chronic health concerns in our community. This is why we support peaceful protest.

Part of our commitment to our community is to make health care equitable for every person every time. We remain committed to these efforts through a number of initiatives designed to increase diversity in our workforce, provide cultural competency training and address social determinants of health.

As an organization, we resolve to use our compassion, creative ideas and collective commitment to ensure we foster a culture that acknowledges everyone equally.

- NEWSROOM /
- MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN – OUR PROMISE OF ACTION

Medical College of Wisconsin – Our Promise of Action

Jun 15, 2020

Milwaukee, June 16, 2020 – *(Attributed to John R. Raymond, Sr., MD, President and CEO, Medical College of Wisconsin)*

In this extraordinarily difficult time, we are suffering simultaneously from three inter-related crises. The COVID-19 pandemic is unlike any since the influenza pandemic of 1918. The economic crisis associated with the pandemic is unprecedented in its magnitude and the swiftness with which it developed; perhaps, being comparable only to the Great Depression that began in 1929. The third crisis, that of racism, is deeply embedded in the fabric of our country and the world. It manifests in many negative ways ranging from arbitrary exclusion to indifference to genocide. It should come as no surprise that because of racism, the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis have had disproportionate impacts on people of color, and especially African American and Black people.

At the Medical College of Wisconsin, we have done many things to foster diversity, inclusion and equity, and to unlearn racism, but we recognize that what we have done is simply not enough. We believe that knowledge can change lives.

We must listen. We must learn. We must engage. We must act. We must make a tangible impact. The problems of racism and violence against people of color have been with us for centuries, and we cannot wait any longer for change.

The Medical College of Wisconsin commits to accelerate our journey to become an anti-racist organization as reflected in our listening, our learning, our decisions, our actions, our investments, and our treatment of people and community.





Versiti

June 9 ·

A Letter from Chris Miskel, CEO and President, Versiti:

As a community leader, dad, brother, uncle, friend, and American citizen, I experienced a range of emotions watching the tragic events of the past week unfold. I am confident that those same emotions are shared by members of our Versiti family, our broader communities, and even the world. Anger, deep sadness, grief. We share those feelings because in the end, there is one thing that unites us – particularly those who serve in a mission focused organization such as ours – and that is our sense of humanity, regardless of color, gender, or political belief. That humanity is why my heart breaks for the family of George Floyd and everyone who is hurting. There are systemic issues in our society that must be addressed. To all of my friends and colleagues who are hurting, I stand with you.

As we watch these struggles consume the news cycle, and reflect on our own beliefs, we must view this as a time of learning and unity – not only as part of a community of individuals, but as an organization which must continue to serve. Our communities are still in need, despite the pain we may feel as we come to work each day. Simultaneously processing these senseless acts and facing a community environment in turmoil while continuing to serve is difficult. Because of your strength, passion, and commitment, we've done just that – and must remain committed to fulfilling our passion to save lives.

We at Versiti stand firm against actions that divide us. That includes racism or any behavior that intends to make those that look different or think differently feel like they cannot bring their whole selves to work. This year, we are elevating our focus on both Diversity AND Inclusion. I'm extremely proud of the work being done by our Diversity Councils in each state, as well as the work of our Multicultural Leadership Council and Generational Engagement Council. The road ahead is certainly long, but we are taking important steps this year to prioritize cultural improvements.

I certainly do not pretend to have the answers. But watching an innocent 25 year-old African American man be murdered while jogging through a neighborhood is jarring. Seeing an African American man that loves bird watching in the park threatened with the idea of a lie meant to paint him as attacking a helpless victim is shocking and enraging. And seeing the entitlement and abuse of power as George Floyd pleaded for his life is gut-wrenching. In these moments – which have always existed but are now just recorded – it is clear that we must take steps to improve things for the next generation. It's not acceptable to have our African American children growing up in a world where they are fearful of those meant to protect them, going for a jog, or participating in normal activities in the park. We cannot stand for it.

As we heal and move forward, let's take the time to really hear each other; to see and feel what your colleagues experience every day. There is no doubt in my mind that with empathy, authenticity, and genuine deep human connections, we will be Stronger Together.

My best,

Chris Miskel

President and CEO, Versiti

