The Committee on Departmental Diversity and Pediatric Healthcare Equity

National Minority Health Month During the Syndemic

“April is National Minority Health Month (NMMH), a time to raise awareness about health disparities that continue to affect racial and ethnic minority populations and encourage action through health education, early detection, and control of disease complications” (National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities). Focusing on the health of these minoritized (Soto) populations comes at a time when the world is watching our country wrestle with two subjects which starkly demonstrate how the health of these communities is greatly affected by societal issues outside of the of the clinical setting: the disproportionate killing of African Americans in police shootings and the increased attacks on Asian American Pacific Islanders.

These two communities share many claims to building our country and unfortunately, also share a history of injustice (NMA-AAPI). The fact that these communities must navigate these crises while also dealing with a “syndemic” (Horton) is a further injustice. We know that the mental and physical health of our AA and AAPI brethren are negatively impacted by the constant din of structural racism in the background of everything that they experience in their daily lives. This is true for our own children and our patients (AAP). This is true for our students, trainees, and colleagues (Lee)(Henderson).

We are called during these times to not only be aware of these realities for our patients, learners, and colleagues, but also to act to make things better. We can take real steps like supporting pending legislation to improve policing (HR7120), combat anti-AAPI hate crimes (S.937), and make anti-racism a public health priority (S.4533). We can act locally in our own UCDH system to advance the causes of anti-racism for the AA and AAPI communities (HEDI). Perhaps most importantly, we can as a Department and community, support and hold space for our colleagues and learners as they process how these recent events affect them. In addition, we can intercede if we hear or see microaggressions or other harms occurring in our work and learning environments (HEDI). Lastly, we can support Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion efforts with resources and time. Combating what are centuries old and often unknowingly ingrained systems will take collective, coordinated, and humble effort.

Additional Resources:
Health Equity
Offline: COVID-19 is not a pandemic (Horton):
https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS
0140-6736(20)32000-6/fulltext
The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health (AAP):
https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/144/2/e
20191765
NMA Statement on the Breonna Taylor Grand Jury Decision that advocates for the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act
https://www.nmanet.org/news/527976/NMA-
Statement-on-the-Breonna-Taylor-Grand-Jury-
Decision.htm
George Floyd Justice in Policing Act (HR7120):
https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-
bill/7120/text
NMA Statement on Decrying Hate Against the Asian American and Pacific Islander Community:
https://www.nmanet.org/news/557291/NMA-
Statement-on-Decrying-Hate-Against-the-Asian-
American-and-Pacific-Islander-Community.htm
UCDH HEDI resources for Anti-racism, Xenophobia and Anti-Asian Racism, Black community resources:
https://health.ucdavis.edu/diversity-inclusion/racial-
justice/anti-racism-resources.html
COVID–19 Hate Crimes Act (S. 937):
https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/117/s937
Anti-Racism in Public Health Act (S.4533)
https://pressley.house.gov/media/press-
releases/pressley-warren-lee-reintroduce-bold-
legislation-confront-structural-racism
Diversity and Inclusion
Time to reconsider the word minority in academic medicine (Soto):
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338775346-
"Time to Reconsider the Word Minority in Academic Medicine"
In light of anti-Asian attacks, medicine needs to listen to Asian American trainees (Lee):
https://www.statnews.com/2021/03/31/in-light-of-anti-
 asian-attacks-medicine-needs-to-listen-to-asian-
american-trainees/
Why I can’t watch the Derek Chauvin Trial (Henderson):
https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/02/opinions/derek-
chauvin-trial-george-floyd-video-trauma-
henderson/index.html
Monthly Reflection:

As the Committee on Departmental Diversity and Pediatric Healthcare Equity, we ask that you take a moment to contemplate these impacts on historical lack of minority physicians, staff, and professionals in health care. We also ask that you take a few moments to engage in the following reflection:

What have you done lately to move forward anti-racism efforts for:
1. Your family and friends
2. Your patients
3. Your learners
4. Your colleagues

Please see the Resources section for a list of EDI issues that you should have in mind during your work.

There are multiple non-profit organizations organizing different grassroots activities nationwide to address AAPI hatred and systemic racism. These events have occurred at different locations and cities. There is an upcoming rally, which is planned for May 15 at 11AM at the State Capitol. This rally is supported by many national and local AAPI organizations as well as the local and national chapters of APAPA. The theme is to call for Unity and Solidarity within the communities and “Zero tolerance for hate”. There will be many guest speakers at this event including VIPs, elected officials, as well as Chief of police and the Sacramento Mayor. In fact, there will be other similar events that occur on the same day at 11AM local time at 9 different locations across the country, which will also convey similar messages. Please check out this website: https://www.communityagainsthate.org/