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The Power to Heal Our Communities

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The Power to Heal Our Communities

Dental leaders respond to current events

June 03, 2020

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The dental profession mourns the passing of George Floyd, who died last week while he was being restrained by police in Minneapolis. We are faced with a hurt that is, unfortunately, all too familiar. The ensuing outcry over Mr. Floyd's death is not just about this singular incident, but instead a centuries-long history of discrimination and brutality against Black people and other communities of color. We add his name to the list of others' whose lives have also been cut short under the heinous, yet enduring legacy of racial injustice.

And with every addition to this list, there is a wound that weeps from repeated injury. There is sadness, anger, and frustration—and rightfully so. Just think: In 1963, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., shared his dream that our society would one day “hew a stone of hope” for his children and generations then unborn, all in the name of democracy and in the security of justice. Instead, 57 years later, we continue to reach new altitudes on what he called “a mountain of despair.”

Today, our organizations stand together alongside the National Dental Association, which issued a [statement on June 3](#), to say NO MORE.

We denounce the acts of racism and violence that have occurred across our nation. We stand with our colleagues who have been affected by current events, and with those whose longstanding fears and heartaches have been stoked once again.

We implore you to embrace diversity and inclusion not as buzzwords or intellectual exercises. This is the moment for the dental community—as a robust tapestry of people from all backgrounds and walks of life—to live its values. We must live each day with intention. We must choose to live with integrity and respect toward our fellow human beings. We must choose to recognize that their lives matter, too.

We won't dismantle systemic inequality overnight. To paraphrase Theodore Parker, the 19th century abolitionist minister whose work inspired the writings of Dr. King, the arc of the moral universe is long. We may not see what the end will be. But, today, we must do what we can—by actions and conscience—to ensure that the arc bends toward justice.

This is the moment to unravel from whatever personal biases we may harbor. To become allies. To have the hard conversations. To listen to voices that have long gone unheard. To speak up for those who have been disenfranchised. To commit to empathy and understanding. To be forces for change. To be agents of harmony. To call out wrong when we see it. And to do what's right when we can.

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President, American Association of Women Dentists

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About the ADA

The not-for-profit ADA is the nation's largest dental association, representing 163,000 dentist members. The premier source of oral health information, the ADA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1859. The ADA's state-of-the-art research facilities develop and test dental products and materials that have advanced the practice of dentistry and made the patient experience more positive. The ADA Seal of Acceptance long has been a valuable and respected guide to consumer dental care products. The monthly The Journal of the American Dental Association (JADA) is the ADA's flagship publication and the best-read scientific journal in dentistry. For more information about the ADA, visit ADA.org. For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA's consumer website MouthHealthy.org

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