



**BLACK CAUCUS  
OF HEALTH WORKERS**

Affiliate of the American Public Health Association

## BLACK CAUCUS OF HEALTH WORKERS

BCHWinfo1968@gmail.com / www.aphabchw.com

### On Juneteenth, Statement in Support of Black Lives Matter and Ending Systemic Racism

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As the Black Caucus of Health Workers, we stand emphatically with Black people all over the world who cry out “Black Lives Matter.” We are ANGRY!!!! Our spirits are broken; we are disheartened and we will not accept these blatant acts of discriminatory racism. It is indeed time to take a stand! Stand in a protest, stand to fight for equality, stand to vote, stand and let our voices be heard; we as Black people will no longer be the “**kneerest**” to white supremacy. We will not allow or accept the repeated abuse of power, highly decorated by white privilege, that has been openly paraded over the years by those expected to enforce the law. The Black Caucus of Health Workers urges our local, state, and federal legislative and congressional constituents to move swiftly toward justice and accountability.

Four hundred and fifty-six hours - that is the span of time between two senseless and brutal murders of Black men; George Floyd, May 25, 2020 and Rayshard Brooks, June 12, 2020. RACISM has reared its ugly head within our society, to manifest as the modern day lynchings of Rayshard Brooks, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Laquan McDonald, and countless others. RACISM operates behind the veil of policies and practices that are the cornerstones of the violence and injustice against Black communities.

BCHW supports APHA Executive Director, Dr. Georges Benjamin’s [statement](#) to its membership: “Racism is a longstanding systemic structure in this country that must be dismantled, through brutally honest conversations, policy changes and practices . . . At the American Public Health Association, every moment of our waking hours is poured into finding better, more healthful lives for all, so everyone has a chance to breathe. It’s our life-blood.”

In reflection of Dr. Benjamin’s words, we are calling for collective action. The load of multiple pandemics, amongst the physical, mental, environmental, and economic violence perpetrated against us weighs heavily on our lives. We demand collective action and call for change in support of Black lives!

Actions:



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- Name RACISM:
  - The overt actions by individuals to oppress or discriminate against Black people.
  - Challenge racism that manifests as acceptance of Black inferiority, because Black Lives Matter!
  - Call out racism that operates in systems that you support every day.
    - The systems that serve to the detriment of black people.
    - The systems that drive health inequities and create disadvantages in our homes, schools, work, and communities.
    - Specifically, demand systems of care and the people that represent these systems.
    - Assess and amend policies and practices that disproportionately burden Black people.
  - Hold Leaders Accountable:
  - Hold all elected officials, legislators, city council members, aldermen, student governments, judges, school board officials, executive leadership, union leaders, and faith leaders accountable to fight for and protect the health and well-being of Black constituents.
- Support Black Lives
  - Protect Black lives--every stage of life, in all of its diversity, and in education and memory.
  - Invest in Black businesses and innovation through sales, funding, and procurement.
  - Preserve Black communities and cultures by remembering the contributions of Black people who built this country, facilitating social determinants that build healthy lives, respecting the people.
- VOTE VOTE VOTE!! Voting in local and national elections gives you the power to put people in office that will advocate for change.
  - Encourage your colleagues, family and friends to register and vote!
  - Be educated on the candidates such that you can make an intelligent decision at the polls.
  - Work to challenge and eliminate practices that result in voter suppression such as removing polling places in Black neighborhoods, gerrymandering and voter identification laws that make it difficult for Blacks to vote.



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There have been far too many acts of violence committed against Black people and Black communities. We can no longer stand by and allow law enforcement officers to senselessly kill Black people and not be held accountable. Structural and institutional racism have been an issue in the United States for far too long. We live in a society that is inundated with systemic racism, fundamentally unequal, where Black people are treated differently because of the color of their skin. This stops now!

We must work towards change! Change that enforces the laws that prohibit education, housing and employment discrimination. It is imperative that Blacks have equity in health, education, research, policy, and the workforce- these are critical components to success. Both protocols and deterrents need to be put in place to avoid further discriminatory acts and the unnecessary loss of life.

BCHW joins in solidarity with the collective protest for change. We are not apologetic and will not lose sight of the reason we are ANGRY! Our protests are just and enduring, they align with public health's most fundamental call to action--to protect and advance quality of health and longevity of life. We must beat upon the moral compass of society to ensure that society does what is right, because Black Lives Matter!