

# Update: National Pharmacy Organizations Take Action Against Racial Injustices

On June 5, 2020, 14 national pharmacy organizations released a joint statement recognizing the critical issues we are facing with the presence of two national pandemics, COVID-19 and racism and discrimination. Unfortunately, both issues persist – COVID-19 has resulted in high death rates that disproportionately affect people of color; and the persistence of systemic racism and discrimination continues to contribute to racial and health inequities.

The joint statement brought much needed and overdue awareness and attention within the pharmacy profession to the longstanding manifestations of racism on social determinants of health and the persistent health disparities that exist in our country. Accordingly, the statement has been urgently acted upon by all signatories. We have engaged in intentional dialogue, listened and learned from one another, and committed to addressing the crisis of racism directly.

As we celebrate American Pharmacists' Month, we are reminded of the oath we took, "I will consider the welfare of humanity and relief of suffering my primary concerns." In carrying out this oath, we assume responsibility to care for those who are disproportionately suffering. Advocating against racism and all forms of discrimination will improve that care. As professional societies, we seek to be accountable to our words by taking action to promote social justice, peace, and healing within our communities.

Collective actions taken to date and in progress include:

1. Convening racial injustice task forces intentionally focused on:
  - a. Self-reflective accountability of organizational leadership, policy and educational training
  - b. Cultivation of leadership that is fully representative and diverse

2. Partnering and promotion of cross organizational activities on racism, diversity, equity and inclusion
3. Amplifying open dialogue on racial injustices and health inequities through statements, blogs, podcasts, open forums, webinars and social media platforms
4. Advocating for existing health disparities-related legislation and on new topics of racial justice
5. Addressing diversity, equity and inclusion in organizational strategic plans
6. Establishing collaborative research focused pharmacy practice activities that reduce health disparities
7. Encouraging peer reviewed publications from diverse authors and on expanded topics of equity and inclusion

This is only the beginning. As this is a journey, we continue to be committed to the following actions:

1. Working together to provide opportunities to address health care disparities and strengthen affected communities
2. Providing pharmacist, student pharmacist, and pharmacy technician education on social injustices and systemic challenges impacting health care.
3. Delivering strategies that focus on change through communications, partnerships, and solutions to address health care disparities
4. Continuing dialogue among pharmacy organizations and stakeholders to identify and implement change.

The collaborative spirit permeating within our profession is weaving new threads that embrace diversity, honor humanity, and support people of color and other marginalized populations. Through these efforts we seek to ensure that pharmacists and pharmacies uphold the highest standards of care for all.

PHARMACY ORGANIZATIONS UNITE TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST RACIAL INJUSTICE

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