

## **Department of Ophthalmology – Solidarity Statement**

Our Department is fully committed to removing structural racism in healthcare, both now in this time of grief and passion and long after the headlines are gone. Like many others, we were outraged and deeply saddened by the recent killing of George Floyd and the many deaths of other Black individuals at the hands of those sworn to protect our communities. We express solidarity with community members protesting anti-Black violence and the ongoing legacy of historic racism.

We know that these treatments and outcomes are not new—and that they affect all aspects of public and private life, including healthcare access and outcomes. Most recently, this has been demonstrated by the disproportionate burden of COVID-19 on Black communities. In Philadelphia, more than 50% of deaths from the virus have been in African American individuals.

As a Department, we commit to listening and taking tangible action. We welcome and fully support the long-needed conversations ignited by the Black Lives Matter movement. We plan to seek broad input that includes the diverse voices and perspectives from our community. Several steps we plan to take include:

- Ensuring that all faculty and staff complete implicit bias training.
- Holding a “safe space” meeting where everyone who has experienced discrimination and unprofessional behavior, particularly our colleagues of color, can discuss issues related to systemic racism, concerns, and experiences in the Department.
- Hosting a townhall meeting with a panel of departmental members with different roles, addressing topics from the “safe space” meeting and encouraging dialogue on questions such as: What do you think about this moment that we are in now? What do you hope for in the future?

To our Black faculty, staff, residents, fellows, patients, alumni, and friends: we stand with you. In the year 2020—a number that has a special meaning for us as an ophthalmology department—we seek 20/20 vision to clarify as a community how we can do better and be better, delivering more equitable care to our patients and treating each other with respect and compassion. We commit to being actively anti-racist, to providing a forum for difficult and important conversations, to learning from those conversations, and to creating a community where it is fully clear that Black Lives Matter.