

A Unified Position Statement Denouncing Racism and Discrimination

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

~Martin Luther King, Jr

The Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society (RJOS), the J. Robert Gladden Orthopaedic Society (JRGOS), the American Association of Latino Orthopaedic Surgeons (AALOS), and the Diversity Advisory Board (DAB) of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) are devoted to creating equity in orthopedic surgery and combating healthcare disparities. It is with heavy hearts that we take this time to denounce not only the acts of overt racism of the last few weeks, but also the systemic racism and continued discrimination in our country.

We speak for the named, including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Rodney King, Abner Louima, Tamir Rice, and Trayvon Martin. We speak for the unnamed. We speak for the unarmed. We speak for those that have been hurt simply living their lives. We speak for the hundreds, the thousands, the millions of victims for whom we have personally cared and treated. We speak for those who have been disparaged and discriminated against- solely because of the color of their skin.

As orthopaedic surgeons, we strive to restore form and function to the human skeleton regardless of the skin that contains the bones, muscles, tendons, and nerves. We ask you to “***stand beside us***,” hand in hand to fight these inequities in society and healthcare. We ask you to “***stand behind us***” leaders of RJOS, JRGOS, AALOS, and the DAB as we condemn policies that are discriminatory and racist, and as we work to enhance diversity in our ranks, and promote cultural sensitivity training. We ask you to “***stand out front***” with your voice and actions to make a difference and engage in uncomfortable conversations with your colleagues about racism and discrimination.

Some individuals have asked how they can possibly make a difference. Here are several small steps that can be taken to improve our society:

- Start by further educating yourself. There are many resources to help expand your knowledge and understanding of the issues.
- Be kind. Teach all children kindness.
- Personally engage and support your community and hospital to address diversity and healthcare inequities.
- Promote diversity/ cultural sensitivity training in your organizations.
- Take an Implicit Association Test.
- Obtain Unconscious Bias Training.
- Donate to one of many organizations fighting to make a difference:
Black Lives Matter, ACLU, The National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls, NAACP, South Poverty Law Center, United Negro College Fund, Black Youth Project 100, Color of Change, The Sentencing Project, The Loveland Foundation, Families

against Mandatory Minimums, A New Way of Life, Dream Defenders, George Floyd Memorial Fund, Fight for Breonna, I Run with Maud, Minnesota Freedom Fund, Black Visions Collective, Reclaim the Block, Campaign Zero, UNICEF, Unicorn Riot, UN Volunteers

- Develop or participate in pipeline programs to enhance diversity in orthopaedic surgery.
- Continue to discuss these issues with friends, colleagues, trainees, and neighbors.
- **Don't be a silent bystander.**

Silence is an endorsement of racism, inequities, and discrimination. As Martin Luther King, Jr once said, "We will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." If you see discriminatory behaviors, or outright racist behaviors, commit to make a change. Step outside of your comfort zone to confront the racism and discrimination around you. Systemic healthcare inequities will be harder to combat, but as orthopaedic surgeons, we must be committed to provide compassionate, unconditional care, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or physical ability.

As individuals, leaders, neighbors, parents, team members, and healthcare providers, it is our responsibility to advocate for the well-being, safety, and health of our community members.

RJOS, JRGOS, AALOS, and the Diversity Advisory Board denounce racism and discrimination and remain passionately committed to improving our society. We cannot tolerate injustices, we cannot tolerate discrimination, and we cannot tolerate racism.