

Public Statement on State Violence

6/3/2020

Equitas Health recognizes state violence as a malignant expression of the institutional racism embedded in our nation's justice system. It is also an abhorrent tool used to prevent the public from enacting change to eliminate the racism that impacts all of our systems, including healthcare, housing, employment, finance, education, politics, and environmental protection. The state sanctioned targeting of African Americans with routine racial profiling, mass incarceration, and police brutality creates a society in which people of color—and African Americans in particular—who wish to peaceably demonstrate in defense of their lives, must risk their health and in fact, death, to do so.

City government responses to demonstrations in Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, Akron, and Toledo, as well as other Ohio and elsewhere, have laid bare the horrific conundrum of demonstrating against state violence. Though these same cities have responded with support and protection of recent protests representing a variety of other issues and vantage points, many municipalities not only fail to protect those demonstrating in support of Black lives, they escalate violence against those demonstrators.

Regarding Our Mission

At Equitas Health, we have come to recognize working for racial justice as an essential part of achieving our mission—as integral to the work of building healthy communities as the fight for LGBTQ+ equality. We are working throughout our agency and with great intention to chart a course that reflects this commitment, both in the workplace environment we create for staff of color, as well as in our efforts to offer radically inclusive and culturally humble services to communities of color.

We are grateful to have a staff that has long been actively engaged in the work of social justice, including exposing white supremacy and uprooting racism. We are committed to supporting staff members who wish to participate in efforts to protect and honor Black lives. We have made a commitment, where possible, to offer them the space and flexibility to do so.

In addition, our support of these values will include donations to support initiatives working against state violence and for racial justice in the communities we serve.

Regarding COVID-19

We have an administration that has not prioritized or made available adequate resources to address this pandemic, including communities of color most impacted. As a result, the conditions created by institutional racism combined with the inadequate response to the

COVID-19 pandemic have made Black communities disproportionately vulnerable to COVID-19 transmissions, complications, and deaths. We call this out as abhorrent and unacceptable.

The urgency and necessity of the current uprising is clear. We also know that those demonstrating or caring for demonstrators are at increased risk of contracting COVID-19. We encourage those participating to carefully monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. If you notice that you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, we encourage you to seek care. Equitas Health's Cincinnati, Dayton, and King-Lincoln (Columbus) Medical Centers are offering drive-in and walk-up COVID-19 testing by appointment. We are a community health center focused on the whole person, and no one is turned away based on inability to pay.

“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice” (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.). We are committed to this end and grateful to join others in the fight for equality and justice.