

Equitas Health Statement on the Anniversary of George Floyd's murder

5/25/2021

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered outside of a convenience store in broad daylight by former Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin. Darnella Frazier, a seventeen-year-old high school student at the time, captured Floyd's murder on her smartphone. The horrifying video footage would prove to be incontrovertible evidence in the prosecution's case for murder. Last month, a jury found Chauvin guilty on all three of the charges brought against him: second-degree murder, third-degree murder, and second-degree manslaughter. In his sentencing next month, he faces decades of prison time.

Chauvin's conviction was an undeniable victory in the fight for racial justice. Yet the relief and celebration that our justice system got it right in such a clear-cut case proves how long and how well the system had worked as designed – to subvert justice for Black and Brown people. It still does. One conviction did not tear down and rebuild a criminal justice system, which has stood on a foundation of white supremacy and systemic racism for centuries. One conviction did not end state violence against Black Americans. One conviction did not bring Gianna Floyd's father home.

On May 24, 2020, George Floyd was like any Black man in America who survives, or even thrives, in spite of the oppressive systems surrounding them. Systems that at their best wish to exclude Black men and at their worst wish them dead. On May 25, the systems prevailed, showing the world their single-minded depravity and disregard for Black lives. For 9 minutes and 29 seconds, George Floyd fought and pleaded for his life until the weight of state-sanctioned white supremacy silenced him. In its pitiful hubris the system did not count on the millions of voices that would rise up in George Floyd's place.

One year later, there is still much work to do. There are still voices that we must hear, and their question is simple: What role will you play in the fight to end racism?