

NEFPS Statement on Racism

“The Northeast Florida Pediatric Society (NEFPS) stands against racism, bigotry and discrimination in all of its forms and affirms to fight against racism, bigotry and discrimination.”

We as a society composed of physicians and practitioners dedicated to the health care of children in Northeast Florida take note of the impact that systemic racism has had and continues to have on the lives of many of our patients and their families.

In August 2019, the American Academy of Pediatrics published *The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health*. This policy statement notes “Racism is a social determinant of health that has profound impact on the health status of children, adolescents, emerging adults, and their families. Although progress has been made toward racial equality and equity, the evidence to support the continued negative impact of racism on health and well-being through implicit and explicit biases, institutional structures, and interpersonal relationships is clear.” We affirm this policy and intend to work proactively to implement its recommendations.

The NEFPS recognizes that in the face of continued racism and mounting evidence regarding the deleterious effects it has on people of color, it is no longer an option for us to remain silent. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “There comes a time when silence is betrayal.” We recognize that many of us have remained silent for too long and have been complicit at least by our inaction. We who have not personally felt the effects of racism have not adequately supported or advocated for our patients, friends and colleagues who have themselves been victims of racism. We also recognize that this statement is long overdue, given the pervasive nature of structural racism in the United States for over 400 years.

Racism has a profound effect as a core determinant of health, including impacts on areas such as infant mortality, education, and involvement in the juvenile justice system. It is chronic trauma. It contributes to prolonged exposure to stress hormones, which in turn predispose individuals to a myriad of chronic diseases. As such, it is imperative that we as individuals and as physicians make every effort to identify, address and eliminate any *de jure* and *de facto* racism.

As pediatricians we are dedicated to dismantling racism and to effect change, so that we can provide the best care for all of our patients. We will implement the American Academy of Pediatrics 2019 recommendations, including optimizing our clinical practice, workforce development and systems through community engagement, professional education, advocacy and public policy. We will partner and stand united

with our local community organizations, as we recognize that together we can make the greatest difference. To this end, we will be an antiracist organization that will encourage its members to engage in activities and to support policies that promote equal health care and social justice for all races.

We resolve to:

- Identify and eliminate any implicit biases and discrimination in our own practices and institutions.
- Be a vocal presence in the local community to advocate for those who continue to suffer under the yoke of systemic racism. We will speak up against racial injustice wherever it occurs in order to effect change.
- Encourage members to vote in local elections to support candidates who make racial justice a top priority.
- Engage with schools that have significant racial achievement gaps.
- Support minority businesses in order to thwart economic exploitation, one of the cornerstones of racial oppression.
- Contribute time, talent and treasure to organizations fighting for social justice and against racism, bigotry and discrimination.
- Boycott businesses that exploit workers of color.