June 16, 2020

Dear community members, patients, families, and friends of Nemours,

Our nation is once again facing frightening and difficult times surrounding the inhumane and indefensible death of an unarmed American citizen of color, and the response of citizens no longer willing to bear the burden. That law enforcement does not treat us all equally is unfortunately not new. The images we see daily on our televisions and in our news feeds of this recent tragedy are disturbing. The growing expressions of solidarity and outrage regardless of race or circumstance offer hope.

On July 2, 1964, almost 56 years ago, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed as a landmark civil rights and labor law in the United States that outlaws discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It prohibits unequal application of voter registration requirements, and racial segregation in schools, employment, and public accommodations.

“Officer, I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe.” George Floyd joins a long list of names in recent years (Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Philando Castille, Alton Sterling, Ahmaud Aubrey, Breonna Taylor, the list goes on), who in recent years have been killed for the color of their skin.

These tragic stories highlight the inequality and racism that not only exists today but has throughout our history as a nation. Sadly, these last words of George Floyd capture the hurt, the pain, and the cry of so many African Americans and other people of color throughout our history as a nation. The death of Floyd in Minneapolis has once again exposed the injustice and racism in the United States and brings to question, how much progress have we actually made from 56 years ago?

We at Nemours cannot even find the words to express the pain that you, our patients and families of color must be experiencing during this time. Furthermore, we want you to know that we stand alongside all of, our families, patients, and associates of color who we have had the privilege to provide care for and work with side by side.

As a steward of society’s most vulnerable citizens, children, we at Nemours recognize our sacred obligation to speak up and to defend the rights of all people, regardless of race, income, geography, or social circumstances. The recent pandemic of COVID-19 has also exposed the longstanding injustice of the health and healthcare disparities that have also plagued our country. Now more than ever, Nemours is committed to our promise to meet the needs of all populations with respect and compassion and to earn your trust.

Nemours Office of Health Equity and Inclusion (OHEI) at Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children was created with a Vision of providing “national leadership in the elimination of pediatric healthcare disparities.” Our Mission is to build community
partnerships to ensure the highest level of health and healthcare through respect for all of the pediatric patients, families, and communities that we serve. Today Nemours is on the next leg of our journey in addressing non-medical social factors with a commitment to creating the healthiest generation of American children.

To our African-American families and other families and communities of color, we want you to know that while many may not have fully understood you, because we may be too privileged to have experienced the hundreds of years of your unjust plight, we do see and hear your pain, and we grieve with you. Furthermore, we stand with you in total solidarity to reject all forms of racism, discrimination, hatred, and injustice.

We invite you to participate in a Nemours Town Hall on June 17 from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. EST for a discussion about racism in our country with the intent of bringing us closer together to improve the health of children. Nemours understands how violence in our communities affects the well-being of all families. We stand with you and support you and our communities.

Community members, families and friends of Nemours: Participate via: YouTube: https://youtu.be/S5HOQrZbTB4

Questions are welcome in advance via email to OHEI@nemours.org.

Sincerely,

Kirk W. Dabney, M.D., MHCDS, Chief Diversity and Equity Officer, Delaware Valley
Jay S. Greenspan, M.D., Chief Executive of the Delaware Valley