



Dear NPWH Community,

I am writing to you at this critical time in my role as the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH) Board Chair. I am also writing to you as a resident of the city of Minneapolis, the epicenter of the horrific murder of George Floyd witnessed by the world, and the subsequent unfolding of protests and events. To offer some situational and personal context, we are living a restricted and turbulent reality. Like a growing number of cities, the main transportation arteries are shut down nightly and curfews continue. There is a state of sorrow, fear and anger that has grown to a national emergency signaling an overdue need for deep change. All of this is simultaneously happening within the context of a COVID pandemic creating a very real and surreal lived experience. People need to gather, to protest, to mourn, to help and offer solace. Diverse communities have come together creating a beautiful public memorial to Mr. Floyd at the site of his death. The strong Minneapolis indigenous community comes to drum and chant in support.

At the same time, we must practice social distancing and masking as our COVID numbers erratically surge around the country. More than a week after the murder of Mr. Floyd, we are living without many services or supplies to the communities in greatest need and nights with a limited 911 response, public transportation often absent and firefighters and police protection severely interrupted. We call our neighbors, our families, our friends daily and ask "you ok?" We gather food and supplies for those in need, we clean our own streets and sit vigil at night with small business owners, we support and participate in protest as we collectively move through this time.

This is not about me or my personal inconvenience as a privileged white woman and healthcare provider. This is about what ultimately and inevitably happens when chronic injustice and inequity is not addressed. My city is your city, it is our city. Racism is a public health issue, not a singular incident.

The killing of George Floyd, and the events since, have brought attention to the stark inequities and systemic racism that persist in our country. NPWH mourns the death of George Floyd and we stand in solidarity with those across the country calling for justice and action to change structures and policies that have enabled and permitted senseless violence to occur.

As health care providers we need to have a deep understanding of how violence, discrimination, and racism have a direct impact on determinants of health for women of color, exacerbate health inequities, and can lead to intergenerational trauma. As women's health nurse practitioners, we know that racism and injustice have an insidious, devastating impact on the patients we serve, their families, our communities.

To the entire NPWH community across the country, we must face the work ahead and reinforce our firm commitment to reducing health inequities and eradicating disparities.



We must also work to increase the diversity within our own women's health profession and not succumb to the institutional structures, and we need to examine our own implicit bias that can prevent change and healing to occur.

We stand in solidarity with and are grateful for the work of **SisterSong**, **Black Mamas Matter Alliance**, **Shades Of Blue Project**, **March for Moms**, **Black Women's Health Imperative**, **National Women's Law Center**, and so many others working for racial justice.

Diana Drake, DNP APRN, WHNP, FAAN, Board Chair, The National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)