

BLACK LIVES MATTER

JUNE, 2020

The core of NASTAD's mission is an unwavering commitment to social justice. We recognize that we will not end the HIV and hepatitis epidemics and related syndemics without dismantling the systems of oppression that fuel racial disparities in access and outcomes. We prioritize fighting injustices where we see them, and we value diversity and inclusivity in all forms. In 2016, NASTAD released the "[NASTAD's Commitment to Black Lives](#)" statement, which stated, "racism has imprinted a legacy of systemic injustices against Black people in the United States. The pervasive undercurrent of white privilege and supremacy exists in the form of obstructed economic, political, and social power for Black people in America." Four years later, we amplify this message more than ever.

The news of the violent racist killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor disgust and outrage us, as well as, the racist killings that have been occurring in this nation since its inception. [Studies show](#) that last year, more than 1,000 people were killed by police; Black people were disproportionately represented among those killed, accounting for 25% of those killed, despite making up only 13% of the population. Police violence, over-policing, and rampant systemic racism are public health issues. We must move away from aggressive militarized police practices and mass incarceration. The time is now to demand and expect change from our political leaders. As a nation, we have fallen into an unfortunate cycle when such tragedy strikes: leaders express their sympathy, protests and riots occur, and then life moves on and returns back to normal with no political, systemic, or economic changes happening. This cycle must end now. We must hold our political leaders accountable and demand action.

As a public health organization, NASTAD will actively work to dismantle systems of racism, discrimination, prejudice, health inequity, and stigma. We will continue to focus our work on addressing social determinants of health; we will continue to call on Congress to invest in public health infrastructure and ensure and expand safety nets; and we will continue to fight for accessible and equitable health care, housing, education, and employment. The urgency of immediate action and the need to center anti-racism efforts in our public health responses is highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic that is disproportionately impacting Black lives, with mortality rates for Black people 2.7 times higher than for white people. It is imperative that we prioritize the lives, health, and well-being of Black people and other people of color.

We call on our allies and those in power to use their privilege to create structural and systemic change. The time is now to stand up together and fight for those who are not being heard and who are underserved. To join the fight against injustices, we encourage you to do the following: directly support local individuals and entities working to advance institutional and systemic changes in Black communities; align public health programs and policies with anti-poverty efforts; donate time, treasure, and/or talent to making our world more just.

Below are organizations that are supporting the cause to which you can contribute:

Places to Donate:

- [Black and Pink](#)
- [George Floyd Memorial Fund](#)
- [I Run with Maud](#)
- [Black Lives Matter](#)
- [NAACP Legal Defense Fund](#)
- [ACLU](#)
- [Black Visions Collective](#)

Petitions to Sign:

- [Justice for George Floyd on change.org](#)
- [Justice for Breonna Taylor on change.org](#)
- [Justice for Tony McDade on change.org](#)