



The recent events targeting the Black community in America have exposed, once again, the painful truths about what is, and has been, broken in our country. We, the UASOM Student Senate, mourn and condemn the senseless murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Oluwatoyin Salau, Tony McDade, and countless other Black victims of extrajudicial, racially motivated killings across the nation.

We stand in solidarity with our Black colleagues, patients, friends, family, and community and say **Black Lives Matter**.

We recognize that historical and structural racism exists in medicine. We must hold ourselves accountable as students and future physicians, who will shape the future discourse of the field. We must also be held accountable as a medical school because **healthcare is a social justice issue**:

- Racism and police brutality¹ are proven to be ongoing public health crises^{2,3}.
- Chronic stress associated with individual and systemic racial discrimination results in poorer physical and mental health outcomes in Black communities⁴.
- Police contact is linked with increased levels of stress and anxiety⁵.
- Police violence is a leading cause of death for young men and a prominent cause of early mortality for people of color in America⁶.
- Barriers to access and quality healthcare further exacerbate racial inequalities in health outcomes, as seen with COVID-19⁷.

To become effective allies, our work is twofold: first, we must educate ourselves and then take substantive and sustainable action to end racially-motivated and structural disparities in our communities and in medicine.

Educational Resources:

We have compiled sources focused on anti-racist work and meaningful allyship [here](#).

Action Plan:

We are beginning with the following initiatives to foster change in our school and nationally:

- I. **Call for our medical school to publicly condemn the aforementioned murders.**
- II. **Diversify Volker Hall** to be more representative of the change we strive to see at UASOM.
- III. Mandate a cultural competency component into the [curriculum as a graduation requirement](#).
- IV. **Incorporate anti-racism and bystander intervention training into medical education** to empower ALL students to recognize racism, stand up, and speak up when they see it without fear of academic repercussions.
- V. **Work with our Medical Education Committee (MEC) and Deans** to evaluate our curriculum for race-based content as [outlined by the attached proposal by MEC student representatives](#).

- VI. **Seek support for students applying to residency at UAB and at other institutions** who undertake peaceful protesting and suffer arrest or disciplinary action by law enforcement.
- VII. Encourage students to **educate themselves** on racial biases and injustices by promoting educational content.
- VIII. **Amend the UASOM Student Senate constitution to include a no-tolerance policy for racially-motivated discrimination of any form.**
- IX. **Seek an internal investigation** for previous racially-motivated allegations made by students to identify themes and address how they were/were not dealt.
- X. Create and maintain a racial justice section on the Student Senate website **to track progress.**
- XI. **Request the NBME/FSMB abolish race-based medicine in questions.** Outside of UAB, we will petition for the abolishment of race-based medicine that is currently taught by the school and is incorporated into questions by the NBME/FSMB.

In Alabama, anti-Blackness is deeply rooted in our community and thus has affected our school and community. UASOM's population is predominantly white and non-Black people-of-color. The onus falls on the majority of students to take action through a combination of self-reflection and listening intently to the words and direction of our Black colleagues and wider community. This is a lifelong process that we are beginning with small, humble steps.

On June 3rd, 2020, many of our Black classmates bravely shared their lived experiences, truths, and demands at the medical student community forum. Their stories highlight necessary changes needed at our institution. We hear you. We stand with you, honor you, and support you. On June 5th, we joined 150+ members of the UAB Medicine community with colleagues across the country to stand in solidarity and commitment to improve the health and safety of the Black community during the [#WhiteCoatsforBlackLives](#) event.

These acts of solidarity are only a beginning. Your support is appreciated as we continue this ongoing racial equity journey to dismantle white supremacy and create a future of equality, respect and opportunity for all. We encourage your direct [feedback](#) in our fight for racial justice at UASOM.

We refuse to be bystanders as hatred engulfs our nation. We strive to build a stronger community and world.

In solidarity,

UASOM Student Senate

1 Strazewski L. Why Police Brutality is a Matter of Public Health. American Medical Association. 08 Jun 2020. <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/health-equity/why-police-brutality-matter-public-health>

2 Paradies Y, Ben J, Denson N, et al. Racism as a Determinant of Health: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. PLoS One. 2015;10(9):e0138511. Published 23 Sep 2015. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0138511

3 Williams DR, Lawrence JA, Davis BA. Racism and Health: Evidence and Needed Research. Annu Rev Public Health. 2019;40:105-125. doi:10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040218-043750

4 Satinski S. Stress on the Streets: Race, Policing, Health and Increasing Trust, not Trauma in Ohio. Human Impact Partners. Published 08 Dec 2015. <https://humanimpact.org/stress-on-the-streets-sos-race-policing-health-and-increasing-trust-not-trauma-in-ohio/>

5 Geller A, Fagan J, Tyler T, and Link B. Aggressive Policing and the Mental Health of Young Urban Men. American Journal of Public Health 104 2321-2327, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302046>

6 Frank Edwards, Hedwig Lee, Michael Esposito. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Aug 2019, 116 (34) 16793-16798; DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1821204116

7 Millett, et al. Assessing Differential Impacts of COVID-19 on Black Communities. Annals of Epidemiology. 14 May 2020.