



# **Clinical Research Forum Statement on the Impact of Racism on Health**

**June 22, 2020**

Adopted by Clinical Research Forum Board of Directors

The murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd—and the powerful protests they engendered—have brought forth a long overdue moment of national reckoning around racism in this country.

The Clinical Research Forum works to treat diseases and improve health and healthcare in this nation through research. Racism is a disease Americans have failed to address for four hundred years. Racism is a public health crisis, and as such, requires an immediate plan to address its current terrible impact and a long-term sustainable plan to prevent its recurrence.

The murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd exposed the violence of racism in this nation. This violence goes back to before the founding of our country and has been sustained by powerful elements in our country ever since. Simultaneously, the disparate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color has laid bare the cruel inequalities in health, healthcare, economic security and opportunity, and determinants of health in this country. This is no surprise to those who experience the impact of the inequality and terrors of racism in their lives every day. However, it is a clarion call to those who have ignored it, or who have recognized it, but have become complacent.

Clinical research has the potential to make profound contributions to social justice and health equity, and some of the studies selected for the Clinical Research Forum Top Ten Awards have achieved this crucial goal. That is why the organizational mission of Clinical Research Forum is so important in combating the health impact of racism. At the same time, it is crucial to recognize and address the racism in our society that exists at the individual level, and the corrosive impact it has on every aspect of our lives and the lives of others. While this is not an explicit part of Clinical Research Forum's mission, it is a prerequisite for the Clinical Research Forum in achieving its goal of improving human health. Therefore, Clinical Research Forum is reinforcing its commitment to addressing individual overt racism and the subtle biases that is the caldron from which overt racism emerges.

In recent years, Clinical Research Forum has led efforts in broadly-engaged team research to ensure authentic participation of community stakeholders in all phases of research so that the results reflect community concerns and thus are more relevant and impactful. We need to do more.

Accordingly, Clinical Research Forum is committed to the following actions. We understand that these are only a start, and we welcome feedback.

1. We will continue to develop and promulgate the use of broadly-engaged team science as a way to develop authentic inclusion of patients and communities of all racial and economic backgrounds in clinical research. We will support building diverse research teams, engaging with, and accepting input from, communities of color who participate in trials.
2. Our Board, staff, and member institutions will engage in implicit bias and anti-racist trainings that will help us build an anti-racist organization to counter the ways we have been complicit in [www.clinicalresearchforum.org](http://www.clinicalresearchforum.org) societal, organizational, and personal racism. This will include educational programs, materials, and guidelines for our members.

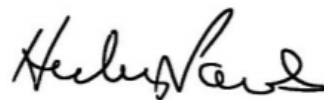
3. At our Leadership Strategic Planning meeting this fall, we will review the impact of racism on health and research, and make plans to improve and augment our efforts on the impact of racism on research and health. Our goal will be to have the greatest impact in this sphere that we can as an organization of the leading clinical research institutions in this country.
4. We will partner with other organizations that have focused upon increasing diversity among researchers. We realize that this is not merely a recruitment issue. We also must focus on programs to build the pipeline of researchers starting early in individuals' education and development. Thus we will work to help develop potential researchers starting from the earliest stages of education.

These are simply the beginning of our plans. The roots and history of racism in this country run deep, and so it will take the work of Clinical Research Forum and many other organizations, institutions, and systems to extirpate them. Most importantly it will take the work of many individuals. The Clinical Research Forum membership includes the nation's leading major healthcare and research institutions and collectively they have the potential and obligation to fight racism in all of its perverse manifestations. We pledge to make the Clinical Research Forum a catalyst for that change internally and nationally.

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**Harry Selker, MD, MSPH**  
**Chair, Clinical Research Forum**  
**Tufts University**



**Herbert Pardes, MD**  
**Vice Chairman, Clinical Research Forum**  
**New York-Presbyterian Hospital**

Clinical Research Forum

2001 K Street NW, 3rd Floor North Washington, DC  
20006  
(202) 367-1176

[www.clinicalresearchforum.org](http://www.clinicalresearchforum.org)