

# Update

marin community clinics



## **Standing for Equity and Justice with Marin Community Clinics' CEO**

June 5, 2020

Dear Marin Community Clinics Family,

Along with millions of other Americans, I am deeply troubled by our country's continued senseless loss of lives, disproportionately black lives, in violent manners. The origin of much of this is our country's history of racial inequality which translated into how differently we live, are educated, are policed, and jailed. George Floyd is the latest in a long list of lives lost tragically and violently. This affects us all because, as Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

In addition to being subjected to violence such as the acts that killed George Floyd, every day black and brown lives are lost in ways that are often less visible but nonetheless devastating. People of color are, in greater numbers, exposed to environmental toxins, poor water, or poor air quality. The effects of systemic racism lead to fewer opportunities for higher education and economic advancement. Living in an unjust and discriminatory society leads to living in fear and frustration. This in turn fosters high stress levels and persistent trauma. All of these conditions, and more, lead to poor health outcomes and greater susceptibility to diseases like cancer, heart attacks – and now COVID-19. Here in Marin, the life expectancy of Marin City residents is 15 years shorter than Ross residents.

At Marin Community Clinics, our core values include Equity and Justice. We believe in "Promoting a culture of fairness, equal opportunity and open communication..." Federally Qualified Health Centers like ours were born out of the social justice movements of the 1970s, and continue to be dedicated to social justice today. Being advocates for each other and for those we serve is part of our DNA.

Inclusiveness and Diversity are also core values. A few years ago, we made safety flyers and posted them in our clinics to let all people entering know they are welcome. We strive to treat each other kindly, acknowledge—and work on—our own implicit biases. We are engaging in empathic communication training to learn how to interact with one another and the diverse communities we serve with awareness and cultural humility. This culture of living our values is something that our health care providers, staff, and volunteers co-create together with our community partners and you.

To promote equity and justice and embrace inclusiveness and diversity, each of us must take action. I expect that many of you are already engaged in some way to responding to this moment.

<https://ideas.ted.com/how-you-can-be-an-ally-in-the-fight-for-racial-justice/>

Together, through love, support, and advocacy, we can make forward progress and create a better tomorrow for all.

**I hope you are continuing to stay safe, in all ways. We are all in this together.**

My best to you all,

Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH  
Chief Executive Officer

p.s. I hope you will support the Clinics by attending our virtual Summer Solstice Celebration on June 24!