June 2, 2020

Dear Members of the EMPath Community,

The racist events of the past weeks have left us feeling enraged, exhausted, sad, and disgusted. The murder of George Floyd, and the widely shared video, was the latest in a string of despicable incidents that have made the ugly truth of systemic racism impossible to ignore. When these videos surface, we are forced to think not just about the horrible loss of life and injustice against one person, but also the countless others that were not recorded.

Racism has been a pandemic in the US for over 400 years. It causes not only deaths that can be videotaped and rightfully spur us to action, but also deaths that are harder to see, from health disparities, structural inequalities, and entrenched poverty.

To those who are bravely standing up and calling for change, know this: we hear you, we see you, and we stand with you. And we will continue to stand with those who bear the brunt of inequality, harassment, and brutality.

At EMPath we are committed to social justice and economic opportunity for all, but we know that these cannot be achieved as long as racism and racial violence are allowed to run unchecked in our communities. Because of this, we plan to act whenever and wherever we can to stem this scourge. First we will listen and learn from our participants and staff, and take the steps they recommend that we take within our organization and through the work we do. We will advocate for changes in government policies that discriminate against the oppressed. And for those of us who are white, we will try to own our special responsibilities to acknowledge and address the injuries our privilege and biases have caused, and take the steps we can to make our communities more just and equitable.

As an organization, and as individuals, we all commit to trying harder, to not stand on the sidelines, to work to root out bias and racism wherever we find it, and to not rest until we have made our society one where all people know that they are safe, respected, treated with justice, and have an equal opportunity to prosper.

In solidarity,

EMPath Executive Team and Board