

UT Southwestern Medical Center

This is a Place Where You Belong

May 31, 2020

To the UT Southwestern Community:

At this time, when we as a nation face the virtually unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and the further pain of economic devastation that has landed particularly harshly on those most vulnerable, it could not be more important that we come together as a national community for the common good.

It is therefore all the more disturbing that instead we are witnessing a resurgence of the manifestations of racism and intolerance that have plagued our country. These include the brutality of the murder of Mr. George Floyd and others who have recently suffered violent acts of racism, as well as the targeting of individuals and communities based on ethnic and national origins.

This should be repugnant to all members of the UT Southwestern community, given the values that bring us together and our mission of promoting health and the opportunity for all individuals to achieve their full potential. For all of you suffering from the distress of the convergence of this manifest intolerance with the specter of COVID-19 and the uncertainty it has cast so broadly, I offer my heartfelt concern and hope you will take some comfort in knowing that the UT Southwestern community rejects intolerance and supports its members in confronting these challenges.

While we can in no way condone the acts of violence that have followed Mr. Floyd's death, the urge to protest the injustice is fully understandable, and the right to nonviolent protest is a cornerstone of our democracy.

As our country grapples with yet another senseless death, I write to each of you to reaffirm my own commitment to diversity and inclusion on our campus and wherever we advance our mission. UT Southwestern stands on the side of those working to improve the world through affirmation of human dignity, kindness in our interactions with others, and respect for every individual, in every encounter, every day. It is incumbent upon each of us, in all we do, to sustain an inclusive culture at UT Southwestern.

I recognize that for many in our community there remains a deep anxiety and uncertainty borne from external circumstances and a time fraught with tension. I am distressed to think that ongoing injustice might affect the feeling of safety or welfare of any of you, but I hope that you will continue to be confident that UT Southwestern remains a safe and welcoming campus for all who learn, train, work, and receive care here.

We seek to ensure that each member of our community, whether faculty, learner, or staff, develops the cultural awareness and competency required to support one another and to advance the mission of UT Southwestern. We extend that concern to our neighbors and the broader community through access to care and our determination to positively impact health equity throughout the region.

UT Southwestern remains an institution which respects the dignity and worth of every individual irrespective of their race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, or national origin. This is a place where you belong, no matter who you are.

Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D.
President, UT Southwestern Medical Center