



Dear Colleagues,

We watched in disbelief as George Floyd was murdered in 8 minutes and 46 seconds at the hands of those who are contracted to serve humanity. Apologies to our black members and members of color who know these situations, often personally, all too often. For many, it was difficult to watch and is challenging to understand that descendants from enslaved people have experienced institutional discrimination and brutality for many years. The death of George Floyd was a turning point and we cannot let ourselves go back. We stand in solidarity with the National Dental Association (NDA) to say no more can leadership stand by silently. The NDA was formed in the early 1900s when people of color were not welcomed into the American Dental Association (ADA) and the state and local societies. Unfortunately, it would be close to 100 years before the ADA would issue an apology and vote Dr. Raymond Gist as its first Black president. Dr. Gist wrote “Along with acknowledging past mistakes and to build a stronger, collaborative platform for future accomplishments, ADA apologizes to dentists for not strongly enforcing non-discriminatory membership practices prior to 1965.”

It’s time to stand on the right side of history. The racism, social injustice and violence that occurred across our nation can no longer be tolerated. Our hearts go out to our members and those who were affected by current events. During his term, former president Dr. Jim Boyle appointed a Diversity and Inclusion Task Force per the request of the PDA Board of Trustees to make a plan to increase diversity in PDA. But it can’t stop here. Coordinating diversity, inclusion and equity training for our leadership and membership is just a start to foster the longitudinal change needed for PDA. For lasting transformation, welcoming and supporting our young dentists, black dentists and dentists of color will take a collaborative effort. As dentists, we are leaders in the oral health arena across Pennsylvania. We need your involvement. As the governance of the PDA tackles this challenge, we encourage each of you to initiate new conversations in your local societies that clearly define goals for diversity and inclusion in scope, frequency and content.

Conversations and initiatives can include:

- Highlighting experiences of diversity across social media and in the *Pennsylvania Dental Journal*.
- Mentoring or creating opportunities for dentists to shadow/visit different offices.
- Educational opportunities regarding being more inclusive.
- Inviting more diverse dentists to get more involved in leadership roles within PDA and local dental societies.

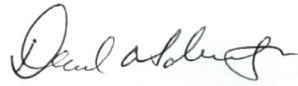
Dr. Chad Gehani, president of the ADA, sums it up best when he said “This is the moment to unravel from whatever personal biases we may harbor. To become allies. To have the hard conversations. To listen to voices that have long gone unheard. To speak up for those who have been disenfranchised. To commit to empathy and understanding. To be forces for change. To be agents of harmony. To call out wrong when we see it. And to do what’s right when we can.”

Join us in making it your intention today to begin the long journey to social equality and inclusion for our leadership, membership and the patients we serve. It begins with you and self-reflection. Ask yourself, what can I/We do?

Sincerely,



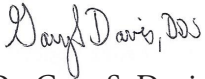
Dr. Charles J. Dombrowski



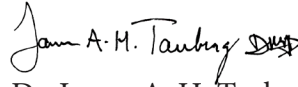
Dr. David A. Schwartz

Dr. Dennis A. Zabelsky

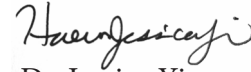
Dr. Dennis A. Zabelsky



Dr. Gary S. Davis



Dr. James A. H. Tauberg



Dr. Jessica Yi

Dr. Jignesh Rudani

Dr. Jignesh Rudani



Dr. John H. Kiessling

Dr. Marian S. Wolford

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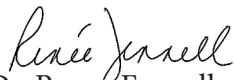
Dr. Nancy R. Rosenthal

Dr. Nipa Thakkar

Dr. Nipa Thakkar



Dr. Rachel Kim



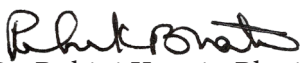
Dr. Renee Fennell

Dr. Richard Troxler

Dr. Richard D. Troxler

Dr. Richard R. Grossman

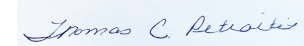
Dr. Richard R. Grossman



Dr. Rohini Kataria-Bhatia



Dr. Sandy E. Harmon



Dr. Thomas C. Petraitis

Dr. Veronica T. Barreto

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