

New Hanover-Pender County Medical Society Bulletin

July 08, 2020

On June second, North Carolina Medical Society President, Palmer Edwards, MD, issued a statement (below) that represented the State Society's members across the state. His words came following the May twenty-fifth death of George Floyd. As a practicing physician and 2020 New Hanover-Pender County Medical Society President, I strongly, and without reservation, support Dr. Edwards' declaration and pledge.

Robert D. J. Henihan, MD, NH-PCMS President



In light of the events unfolding over the last 10 days, which sadly reflect the ongoing legacy of racism in our country, I feel it is important to reiterate the values that are the bedrock of the North Carolina Medical Society. The NCMS, representing physicians and PAs throughout the state, holds the safeguarding of human life and health to be the ultimate guiding principle in all we do to protect and advocate for the medical profession.

The death of George Floyd in Minneapolis last week has added yet another layer of pain, outrage and fear in our communities, which are still reeling from a devastating global pandemic. The unrest over the past days has shone a bright light on the deep rifts in our society. Racism, hatred and ignorance persist.

We know that racial and ethnic inequities are a large contributor to health disparities. The medical casualties due to COVID-19 bear witness to this fact. In North Carolina today the data show that African-Americans account for 35 percent of the COVID-19 fatalities, yet African-Americans make up just 22 percent of the state's population. We need policy action now, along with abiding patience and engagement rather than impulsive and indiscriminate violence to persons and property.

The NCMS, representing a profession duty-bound to do no harm, must focus on opportunities for positive change that are within our realm. We have the power and responsibility as citizens and medical professionals to do our part to address the inequities that have given rise to the rage we currently are witnessing.

We know there are significant disparities within our health care system impacting many North Carolinians. How can we address them through our day-to-day practice; through the institutions of which we are part; through the NCMS? I challenge each of you, my colleagues, to examine your assumptions on how we might accomplish this crucial task.

As your professional society we have made health equity a central theme of our work going forward. We hope to engage you in an ongoing dialogue about how to stop perpetuating the inequities we see. The solutions are infinitely demanding and complex, but the effort is critical to the future of our country. The NCMS will not shrink from the challenge.

We look forward to engaging with you in the coming months as we continue our necessary work to address these issues on many fronts.

Be safe and well!

Palmer Edwards, MD, DFAPA, President, NCMS