

For Immediate Release

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Statement from Jordan Powell, President & CEO, and Veronica Clark, Board Chair of the Illinois Primary Health Care Association on the Death of George Floyd

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The Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA) shares in our nation's grief as we mourn the murder of George Floyd.

The police brutality that caused George Floyd's death, and the resulting violence in Minneapolis and other cities around the country in its aftermath are horrifying. There is a clear destructive effect on the physical and mental wellbeing of those involved, and on those who witness such tragedy.

Illinois' community health centers have long led the way for social change, demanding access for all citizens – regardless of their race or ethnicity - to quality healthcare. As Congress passed legislation in 1965 creating community health centers, seeds were being planted in Chicago and across our great state to demand better for our communities. That year, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was invited to lead demonstrations over the disparities in Chicago neighborhoods. Access to quality health care was among the leading demands at that time. For as far as we have come, the events of the past week remind us that demand urgently continues today.

IPHCA wants to lead a constructive and meaningful dialogue on the impact of institutional racism on our individual and collective health, including during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. African-American and Latino communities have been hit especially and disproportionately hard by coronavirus. IPHCA will continue to focus on social determinants of health to ensure health equity and better outcomes for vulnerable populations.

Our call for access to quality healthcare for all and a better understanding of social factors impacting our health must not lose sight of what has yet again stirred our nation awake: social injustice and far too many cases of African-American murder. George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Sandra Bland – they are not exceptions, but part of a disturbing pattern of being victims simply by being black in America. We can never reach our goals of full physical, mental and emotional health until we actually address social injustice and racism in our communities.

