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A Message About Racism from the Chief Medical Officer 01 JUN2020 0800

To All EMS Personnel in the EMS System for Metropolitan Oklahoma City & Tulsa

It is important to address issues that impact the acute health of our communities we serve, especially issues that can simultaneously involve your safety. Because I care for EVERYONE in our communities, I am now speaking about the recent dynamics of racial distress in our communities.

I believe racism sadly continues to exist across the United States (and the rest of Planet Earth), including within our communities. Racism is wrong. Racism is always wrong on any level. Regardless of someone's skin color or nationality, we are one blood.

Racism threatens and impairs a person's access to care and the quality of care they can receive. Everyone deserves high quality medical care.

Correlating a person's race or nationality to risks of certain diseases (e.g. hypertension, diabetes, or sickle cell anemia) is not racism. That's using a part of who that patient is to better estimate their risk of an illness to make the appropriate diagnosis and provide correct care for their health and wellbeing.

Now, about the respect we show someone and their loved ones and our willingness to provide the best care we are trained and able to give? Those should never be based on a person's race – or gender, or sexual orientation, or religious beliefs or any other similar characteristic. I know you join me in this strong belief system.

I appreciate you providing service – seen and unseen – in supporting the medical wellbeing of all involved or impacted by recent and ongoing protests in our communities regarding racism. To be transparent, I fully support the rights of persons to gather to express concerns, distrust, and anger as a form of advocacy. I do not support and do not believe any of us have "rights" to inflict harm onto others being peaceful or onto the property owned by others or by a community.

These can be and recently are tense days and nights. Many of you (and I) have concerns about multiple casualties that could result from these gatherings if they become violent. Many of you (and I) have concerns about an unintentional increase of SARS-CoV-2 transmission within these and other large crowds.

My expectation of you is simply my self-expectation: Always commit and work to be the role model EMS professional our patients and our communities need. That includes being committed to avoiding racism in our actions and to stop racism when we see it being done by others. Thank you for continuing to gladly embrace this expectation as we serve everyone needing our EMS care.

Dr. Goodloe