



Association of American Cancer Institutes Statement on Discrimination and Violence

The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) condemns racism, discrimination, and violence. We firmly believe that these intertwined issues must be confronted with a sense of urgency — just as we address cancer, infectious diseases, and other crises that impact public health.

AACI's Board of Directors, staff, and cancer center leaders are deeply saddened by continued violence against communities of color. We are angered by recent mass shootings targeting Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx individuals, in addition to the innumerable senseless, violent deaths that preceded them. We are also deeply concerned by increasing threats of violence and discrimination against other marginalized communities, including LGBTQ+ individuals.

Gun violence itself has been declared a public health crisis, responsible for the deaths of more than 45,000 Americans each year. Public health advocates have noted that xenophobic language used to describe the coronavirus early in the pandemic has fueled an increase in hate crimes against Asian Americans. It has also been documented that gun homicides, assaults, and police shootings disproportionately harm historically underfunded communities, further intensifying inequities that permeate all facets of life — including health care.

As an association representing 108 academic and freestanding cancer centers across the United States and in Canada, AACI is committed to promoting health equity while reducing the burden of cancer through research, treatment, and advocacy. In our role as advocates, it is our duty to seek ways to improve health outcomes and quality of life for all people. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are key to fulfilling our mission of accelerating progress against cancer.

Since 2021, AACI has honored individuals who are promoting health equity, mitigating cancer disparities, and advocating for DEI at their cancer center with the Cancer Health Equity Award. Under the guidance of AACI President Caryn Lerman, PhD, the association is taking steps to promote diversity throughout the cancer center leadership pipeline. And AACI continues to advocate for improved access to cancer screening and treatment and helps develop and share best practices for community outreach, engagement, and recruitment of racial, ethnic, and gender minorities to clinical trials.

But there is still work to do. AACI continues to stand in solidarity with everyone who is working to confront systemic discrimination and all forms of injustice. We pledge to do our part to dismantle harmful systems of oppression.