

2020 Year of Outrage

As we begin the 6th month of this remarkable year I am impressed that it has been a series of *Months of Outrage*:

- Outrage at the uncontrollable surge of death and illness that overwhelmed our healthcare system...
- Outrage at lack of Personal Protective Equipment needed to protect the lives of the members of the healthcare work force who heroically took on the battle....
- Outrage at the dramatic changes in our daily living that were necessary to restore and protect the Public Health....
- Outrage at loss of income and destruction of our economy.

And then, when it seemed that we were finally beginning to return to “normal”:

- Outrage at the senseless loss of Black Lives, especially Male Black Lives
- Outrage at police bullying and brutality
- Outrage at racial injustice

During the seven decades of my life, I have often experienced this outrage. However, outrage at injustice in itself does not bring about change. In response I have marched, I have demonstrated, I have protested, I have organized communities and I have used my medical skills and knowledge to improve the conditions of people at all levels. Most importantly I have stood up for justice and against inequality. In my approach to life I have continued to “keep hope alive” and believe that eventually the innate goodness of humanity would prevail.

I am fortunate that I have lived long enough to observe the slow march of progressive reform... but there are times like now, when we take a major step backwards. It is disheartening, but we have to continue to stand up to injustice, continue to respond to diseases, continue to protect society. As healthcare providers and staff members, we will continue to provide care that mitigates disparities. As health educators we will continue to produce healthcare providers who are aware of the impact which racism and poverty have on health. As researchers we will continue to seek to understand disease processes in all populations. As students, we will continue to hold onto and further advance the spirit of caring for others that led us to this profession. We will continue to recognize and reverse disparities and inequities in our own workforce.

Most importantly we must not be disheartened, we must not be overwhelmed. We are stronger than the forces that are being waged against us. We **can** move forward, we **can't** give up. We must to continue to march on!

Dr. Robert Johnson, Dean, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and Interim Dean,
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School