

Dear Rutgers School of Public Health,

The health disparities associated with the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the ongoing policing and brutal killing of Black and Brown men in our country point to the reprehensible systemic racism that continues to run rampant in our society. Racism and all forms of discrimination are public health crises that must be addressed in order to tackle pressing public health issues, like the current pandemic.

At the Rutgers School of Public Health we all must continue to be dedicated to improving the public's health. This requires attention to not only behaviors (that is just too simple), but to the structural conditions that fuel risk and health disparities which lead to the disproportionate number of COVID-19 related deaths and the endless violence experienced by Black and Brown communities.

I trust you to join me in our ongoing vigilance to speak out and act against any form of discrimination and oppression in our School and work to support those who would otherwise be silenced and referred to as 'thugs.'

In good health,

Perry N. Halkitis, PhD, MS, MPH
Dean, Rutgers School of Public Health