



Montefiore

From the OFFICE OF THE DEAN



Dear Einstein Community:

Yesterday, Joseph R. Biden Jr., became our 46th president during an historic and most unusual inauguration ceremony. In his inaugural address, President Biden struck chords of hope and unity while noting there is “much to restore, to heal, to repair, and to gain.”

He asked Americans to “start afresh” by “listening, hearing, and showing respect for one another.” And, he asked those who did not vote for him to “take the measure of me and my heart, and if you still disagree, so be it. That’s America. That’s democracy.” But he also cautioned, “Disagreement must not lead to disunion.”

President Biden’s overarching message was reflected poignantly in Amanda Gorman’s poem, [“The Hill We Climb,”](#) which concluded with these beautiful words: “When day comes, we step out of the shade aflame and unafraid. The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light. If only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it.”

While neither President Biden’s speech nor Ms. Gorman’s poem sugar-coated the many challenges our nation currently faces—from ramping up our COVID-19 vaccination program to addressing our current national divide and systemic racism—each offered the hope of a better future with the nation working together.

“Unity is the path forward,” said the president. “We must meet this moment as the *United* States of America.”

A Challenge to Stop COVID-19 in Its Tracks

In the day preceding inauguration, then President-Elect Biden shared several initial goals of his administration. This included announcing a challenge to all Americans to wear a mask during the first 100 days of his presidency. This challenge supports the claim made in July by Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the CDC, that our nation could halt the spread of SAR-COV-2 if everyone would wear a mask for three months.

At Einstein, we've made mask wearing a top priority to help prevent the spread of the virus and, fortunately, have enjoyed considerable success in this endeavor. In the spirit of President Biden's challenge, I encourage each and every one of us to take part and serve as ambassadors of mask-wearing in our communities. As members of a medical and research institution, we can and should lead by example.

By the time Joe Biden was sworn in as our new president, COVID-19 had taken the lives of more than 400,000 Americans—more than all American lives lost during World War II. During his inaugural address, he said, "We're entering what may be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus. We must set aside politics and finally face this pandemic as one nation."

To accomplish this goal, he plans to launch a massive public education campaign to increase vaccine acceptance to ensure that 100 million shots can be administered during the first 100 days of his administration. We'll do our best at Einstein and Montefiore to be counted among those receiving vaccinations, as doing so will help our nation achieve population immunity safely, and more effectively combat the spread of COVID-19.

As we begin a new era in our national politics, I am heartened by the fact that our president and his senior leadership team are delivering many positive messages that deal with critical issues of science, medicine, and medical education. These will all have a beneficial impact on our community and, hopefully, help make 2021 a year of great promise and accomplishment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Joe Biden", written in a cursive style.

Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D.

The Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer

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