



Montefiore

From the OFFICE OF THE DEAN



Dear Einstein Community:

Earlier this month, we marked two grim events—the one-year anniversary of the murder of George Floyd and the 100th year since the Tulsa Massacre of 1921. As a nation, we are beginning to acknowledge important aspects of our history that for too long have been ignored or underrecognized. These include Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the 13th Amendment—and Juneteenth, which was first recognized as a New York State holiday last year.

Facing difficult or uncomfortable realities of our country's history is important if we are to grow as individuals and as a nation. Understanding the significance of Juneteenth, which celebrates freedom for Blacks and highlights Black excellence, is an important step. It also reinforces the need to redouble our efforts to fight racism and address societal inequities, like the racial disparities evidenced during the current pandemic. At Einstein, we'll mark Juneteenth a day early, on Friday, June 18, while also holding one of our monthly Appreciation events.

As part of our commemoration of Juneteenth, as well as Pride Month, which I wrote to the Einstein community about yesterday, please feel free to [tune into my dean's chat](#) this Friday. I will be joined by Dr. Nerys Benfield, senior associate dean for diversity and inclusion, and members of the Einstein community to discuss both Juneteenth and Pride Month, what these celebrations mean to them, and how it affects both their personal and professional lives.

Before our conversation, I encourage you to read about the history and significance of both Juneteenth and National Pride Month (of particular note is a recent article by Einstein Ph.D. candidate Victoria Sedwick, titled "[Celebrating Juneteenth: from Slavery to Freedom](#)").

Additionally, I want to bring to your attention some other notable events and news that I believe are of interest:

- From **June 17 to 23**, the inaugural [**National Black Family Cancer Awareness Week**](#) seeks to raise awareness about cancer among one of the most vulnerable segments of our population, including encouraging participation in clinical research. Read [**this The Doctor's Tablet blog**](#) by Bruce Rapkin, Ph.D., who addresses why we need a specific focus on cancer for Black families and details specific initiatives by Montefiore and the Albert Einstein Cancer Center to increase the participation of Black Americans in clinical trials.
- On **June 19**, [**Sickle Cell Awareness Day**](#) is held annually to increase public knowledge and understanding of this disease and the challenges experienced by patients, their families, and caregivers. To learn about the work our investigators are doing—and have been involved with throughout Einstein's history—read the [**Fall 2017 issue**](#) of Einstein magazine, which featured a cover story, "Overcoming Sickle Cell Disease" (beginning on page 20).

In closing, it's my hope our celebration of Juneteenth will offer an opportunity to reflect on our nation's history. In doing so, we can take pride in the insights and debates that helped shape our democracy over the past 250 years and continue today. And, if we are honest with ourselves and with one another, we can acknowledge the injustices from which we can learn, and that we must correct, so that our nation can truly be a place of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for each and every one of us.

Sincerely,



Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D.

The Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean

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