



Advancing Transfusion and
Cellular Therapies Worldwide

Dear colleagues,

George Floyd was 46 years old. He was a father to three children. He worked as a musician, a truck driver and a security guard.

He was a man. A black man. A man whose life was stolen from him. His death has shaken us to our core, shocked our conscience and brought new unrest to our communities. It is a tragic reminder of the systemic racism and institutionalized discrimination that continues in the United States.

It was recently learned that George Floyd tested positive for COVID-19. During this pandemic, we have seen black Americans dying in disproportionate numbers. This reality reflects the persistent, stubborn and unconscionable health disparities that continue in the United States.

People of color in the United States are more likely to be uninsured and experience chronic health conditions. They also have higher rates of poverty, unemployment, food insecurity and homelessness—all of which can lead to poorer health outcomes.

AABB stands shoulder to shoulder with those who shine a spotlight on, and work to end, racial injustice. We proudly include the AABB family and our entire blood community in that group. We ensure that our life-saving resource gets to anyone who needs it, and especially those for whom quality health care is too often out of reach.

AABB's members and staff come from all walks of life and directly support their local communities each and every day. Our donors and patients live in every corner of the country. That diversity is in many ways our greatest strength.

Yet health disparities continue to affect our world as well. Research shows that people of color are significantly underrepresented among blood donors, which can be detrimental for patients battling certain health conditions like sickle cell disease—the majority of whom are black. Similar disparities are seen in cellular therapy donation, leading, again, to fewer treatment options for black patients. Our community has long been dedicated to providing blood and biotherapeutics for these patients. We must rededicate ourselves to increasing minority donor engagement, because patients' lives depend on it.

We have never been more grateful for or inspired by the work you do. You work tirelessly to ensure we have enough blood each day to meet patients' needs, and we've had moments recently where shortages have reached critical levels. But as you have done time and again, you brought us back from the brink with caring, creativity and compassion. You have saved lives and kept families together. You, along with the donors who continue to selflessly provide

the life-saving gift of blood, are often silent heroes.

We have a great deal of work left to do—not just to get through this current pandemic, which is difficult enough—but to achieve our long-term vision of protecting every donor, serving every patient and providing quality care to those who desperately need it.

Together, as one connected blood community—from vein to vein—we can do our part to make a significant difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Shaz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Beth Shaz, MD
AABB President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debra BenAvram". The signature is cursive and includes a large, stylized initial "D".

Debra BenAvram, FASAE, CAE
AABB Chief Executive Officer