



Dear AAFA Community,

Today would have been Breonna Taylor's 27th birthday. On March 13, Taylor, who was an EMT working on the frontlines of the pandemic, was fatally shot by the police in her Louisville, Kentucky home. The losses of Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and so many others who have been unjustly killed are a horrific reminder that racism is a sickness that's plagued us far longer than COVID-19.

We're seeing COVID-19 take a disproportionate toll on Black, Native and Hispanic Americans. The same sharp inequities exist in the population we serve affected by asthma. The violence aimed at Black Americans and the health disparities we'd like to eradicate both have the shameful link of extreme racial bias. The underpinning virus of racial injustice which never seems to go away is once again hitting a fever pitch. I hope once and for all, it's not incurable. I hope real and meaningful change emerges from the protests happening now, along with some of the grim lessons we're learning from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We want you to know that we are here for you. We also want to update you on some of the direct actions AAFA's been taking to create change for some of the most vulnerable groups in our community.

In the coming weeks, AAFA is set to release a new report on asthma disparities in the United States. This comprehensive examination is a follow-up to our 2005 report on [Ethnic Disparities in the Burden and Treatment of Asthma](#) (PDF). That report found Black and Puerto Rican Americans have the highest rates of asthma. They were also three times more likely to die from asthma than their white counterparts. Black women have the highest fatality rate for asthma. In our upcoming report, we will share a roadmap to address structural and systemic failures that lead to asthma health disparities. This is one part of AAFA's multi-year, strategic focus to dramatically reduce asthma

disparities for underserved and marginalized groups.

We trust the core values we embody at AAFA reflect everyone's desire to act against racism, injustice and all forms of inequity. As our daily mission shows, dismantling the systems that fuel health disparities and racial injustice is a process that is distressingly slow. The power of organizing and the type of energy we've seen generated over recent weeks by people marching all over the world and demanding change is giving us optimism that something different is afoot. AAFA is going to keep fighting for you and alongside you, and we're not going to stop until we achieve equality for all.



Your ally in good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth Mendez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kenneth Mendez
AAFA President and CEO