

June 3, 2020

Those who know me know my involvement in community health began some 40 years ago, as a Boston College student away from home and in need of a local doctor. I chose a community health center for my care, and eventually served on its board of directors as a patient consumer. Thirty years later, I would leave corporate America to do more meaningful work and spent the next decade running two multi-site community health centers, near where the community health movement began, some 50 years ago.

While running health centers, including one in public housing, I remember an elderly African American resident saying, “I used to hear about the *War on Poverty*, but now I only hear about poverty.” It broke my heart to hear her articulate that lost vision of a dream.

The death of Mr. George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis was horrific. Since then, peaceful demonstrations, riots and violence have broken out nationwide and in sister cities around the world. This tragedy, and too many like it under too similar circumstances, are difficult to reason with – yet, they once again highlight the inequities African Americans have always lived with in this country.

People are hurt physically and spiritually, depleted morally. They are weary. They are angry. Appropriately so.

I know many of you, like me, have been deeply moved by Mr. Floyd’s untimely death and these subsequent worldwide events. Maybe some of you, like me, have been asking yourselves what can I do? How do I square with myself this lifelong legacy – and this ongoing moral dilemma – when confronted with it in such a blatant way, recorded in broad daylight, and played back repeatedly, undeniably, for all to see? This is a test. This is our wake-up call.

So, what do I do? What do we do?



You, me, all of us can commit today that we and our families, our communities and our organizations, community-, faith-, and employment-based, will do all we can to support African American men, women and children and foster a culture that deeply values and respects diversity and inclusion. One tangible way we can do this is to **make our voices heard by voting in every election and completing our 2020 census.**

As organizations – as a movement – neighborhood (community) health centers were founded to address injustices and inequalities. More than 50 years ago, community health and civil rights activists fought together to improve the lives of Americans living in deep poverty and in desperate need of health care, regardless of race. Moving on the economic opportunity presented by President Johnson, Dr. Jack Geiger (pictured left with Dr. John Hatch) and other health care pioneers established community health centers in the medically underserved Boston neighborhood of Columbia Point,


Dorchester, and in the all-black town of Mound Bayou, Mississippi. It's their example and their commitment to serving underserved communities that drives us today.

Today, I commit myself and this organization to channel our sorrow and anger into peaceful, sustained, and effective energies and actions that help dismantle systematic racism where it exists. Where ever we encounter it. In real time. In that moment.

I invite you to join me in standing with our African American communities, to be willing to make change, to teach and to learn, to take action, to create new thoughts and behaviors, to unlearn old ones, and to make genuine and sustained efforts to be the change.

My sincere condolences to the Floyd family. I cannot begin to imagine what they must be going through.

Black Lives Matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Henry N. Tuttle".

Henry N. Tuttle  
President and Chief Executive Officer

[Health Center Partners of Southern California](#), a family of companies, includes a [16-membership organization](#) of federally qualified health centers, Indian Health Services Organizations, both urban and sovereign, and Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, collectively serving 850,000+ patients each year, for 3.6 million patient visits each year, at 160 practice sites across San Diego, Riverside, Imperial counties, with the seventh largest provider group in the region. [2018/2019 Impact Report](#).