

**UTHSC Department of Surgery
Statement on Increase in Anti-Asian Violence Across the Country**

March 19, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

We are deeply saddened to have to issue another statement of condemnation against racism, hate and violence.

As with the rest of the nation, we are horrified by the recent violent attacks in Atlanta, which resulted in the deaths of eight individuals, six of whom were of Asian descent. Unfortunately, this has occurred in the background of a highly disturbing trend. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a clear rise in racism against the Asian, Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities, fueled by the racist terminology, still used by some, to describe the origins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

In the past few months, we have witnessed an alarming escalation of xenophobia and anti-Asian expressions including incidents of verbal abuse, discrimination and physical violence. Appallingly, the organization, *Stop AAPI Hate*, has reported over 500 such incidents in February and March of 2021 alone.

We would like to assure you that the Department of Surgery stands in solidarity with and in full support of our AAPI students, residents, fellows, staff and faculty members. These events continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining our commitment as a Department to denounce racism and discrimination in any form whether related to race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion.

As pledged last year, the Department of Surgery continues to work resolutely towards the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion. We call on each of us to redouble our efforts and purposefully work together to eliminate discrimination and racial injustice in both our workplace and community.

Sincerely,



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Harwell Alumni Endowed Chair in Surgery
Professor and Chair

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