



CANADIAN ANESTHESIOLOGISTS' SOCIETY  
SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DES ANESTHÉSIOLOGISTES

SCIENCE • VIGILANCE • COMPASSION

## CAS Physician Wellness Committee

### Proclamation of Black Anti-Racism Action and Solidarity

On behalf of the CAS Wellness Committee I am writing to let Black colleagues and learners know that we see the deep injustice and violence that continues to be committed against you and your communities. I am writing to let you know that we understand that this is taking a toll on your health and your wellness in deep and complex ways.

I have spoken with many of you over the past months and years about the deeply embedded racism in our institutions and in our world, and in the last few days I have heard from you about the acute exacerbation of your pain.

We as a committee are here for you. Not just to lend support and to commit to deep listening, but also to act. Please reach out to me via email at [anesthesia@cas.ca](mailto:anesthesia@cas.ca) if you need tangible support.

The CAS statement on diversity and inclusion promotes that every person has the right to be accepted and treated with respect and dignity. I call upon all colleagues to think carefully about what that really means. What does it mean to all individuals and groups of people, based on racial identity, cultural norms and behavior, language, and other markers of racial and ethnic identity?

As a non-Black physician how will you use your power and privilege to make change and to tangibly support the wellness of your Black colleagues and learners? This is not a time to ask them to teach us. It is incumbent upon us to do the difficult and uncomfortable work of uncovering our own biases and being willing to stand up in the face of long-standing injustice.

I have permission from Dr Lisa Robinson, Associate Dean, Inclusion and Diversity, Faculty of Medicine, to share this excellent statement from the University of Toronto, which includes some resources for those who are unsure where to start:

OID Statement of Solidarity – Resisting Anti-Blackness:

- <https://medicine.utoronto.ca/oid-statement-solidarity-resisting-anti-blackness>

The Black Physicians Canada website has resources for Black physicians and medical students as well as learning and action points for allies.

- <https://blackphysicians.ca/>

I have also written about the various ways, big and small, that we can practice active allyship in this moment:

- [https://twitter.com/SarooSharda MD/status/1269449634436526081?s=20](https://twitter.com/SarooSharda_MD/status/1269449634436526081?s=20)

I urge you to pick at least one of these actions as a step towards a long process of learning and unlearning. Even one action can be meaningful. As a black colleague told me yesterday, “To start is to open the conversation.”

***Here are some other ways we can act as Anesthesiologists:***

**As an educator:**

- Check-in with your Black learners. Listen to their needs without judgement. Do they need to be excused from clinical duties? Do they need access to extra mental health support? Do they need additional and specific mentorship?
- Critically examine your current curricula. Are you actively teaching anti-racism? Are you including diverse voices and clinical scenarios in your teaching?
- Critically examine your application processes for residency programs. Are you building diverse, inclusive, and anti-racist policies and procedures?

**As a colleague:**

- Check-in with your Black colleagues and friends. Again, listen to them. With humility. Can you offer to help with clinical duties or offer other practical help?
- Ask your organizations how they are actively working towards anti-racism. Have you ever had rounds on this topic given by a Black person? Or anti-racism training?

**As a leader:**

- Advocate for real and sustained policy change.
- Make anti-racism and anti-oppression training mandatory for your teams.
- Look at your leadership teams and ask yourself “Where are our Black leaders?” and if they are not around the table, ask yourself what you are going to do to make space for their important leadership.

**As a scholar:**

- Become familiar with the literature on poorer health outcomes for Black communities and understand the contribution of systemic racism to these statistics.
- Build programs of research by partnering with Black colleagues. Support and amplify the scholarly work they are already doing in tangible ways (including funding). Cite Black scholars and invite them to speak on topics in which they have expertise. Remunerate them appropriately for their work.

***“If the only people we can extend empathy to are those who are like us, who come from the same country we do, or who share our faith, then we misunderstand what empathy is.”***

Clint Smith, *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks About Race*

Standing and acting in solidarity with our Black community,

Saroo Sharda (Chair)  
on behalf of the CAS Physician Wellness Committee