

BREATHE's Unity Statement

June 10, 2020. Breathing is not a choice. All people deserve to breathe; it is a necessity of life. Systemic racism has been a knee to the neck of African American and Black communities for generations, literally taking their breath and their lives away.

Systemic racism threatens health equity and lung health. BREATHE (Bridging Research Efforts and Advocacy Toward Healthy Environments) stands in unity with others who are protesting injustice and seeking justice for all people of color.

BREATHE's mission is to promote lung health and healthy environments to achieve health equity through a) research; b) community outreach and empowerment; c) advocacy and policy development; and d) access to health services. All persons should have the opportunity to live and breathe in an environment that is safe and healthy, and in communities that are thriving.

BREATHE stands for giving everyone a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential. The World Health Organization calls this, "health equity." We believe that no one should be disadvantaged from achieving their full health potential. Disparities across health, income, employment and education are pervasive, and have been laid bare by COVID-19. The most recent horrific killings of many African Americans like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor are unjust, unacceptable, and inhumane. To reach their full health potential, persons of color must be treated with value, respect, and dignity.

Today, we intensify our commitment to reduce health disparities, ensure equitable healthcare, and advocate for health policies that make breathing in a socially just society a reality for all. We endorse and defend policies to rid our nation of systemic racism that will undeniably lead to health equity for all.

Sincerely,

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