

# NYSNA 2020 Convention Resolutions

## Resolution #4: NYSNA is Committed to Promoting Racial Justice

Submitted by the NYSNA Board of Directors

**Whereas**, the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the deep economic and racial disparities in New York's healthcare system;

**Whereas**, African Americans and Latinx New Yorkers are dying from COVID-19 at twice the rate of white New Yorkers;

**Whereas**, similar racial disparities continue to be observed in a wide variety of health outcomes including stroke, heart disease, maternal mortality, childhood asthma, mental health, sickle cell disease, nearly all cancers, and deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolisms, among others;

**Whereas**, significant racial disparities also are evident in the ranks of the uninsured, those who delay or do not seek care because they cannot afford the cost, and the availability of care in communities;

**Whereas**, decades of research have made it clear these health disparities are not primarily the result of genetics or lifestyle choices, but the accumulated impact of what we now call the social determinants of health, factors embedded in the very fabric of our communities and stemming from the legacy of segregation, racial discrimination and poverty;

**Whereas**, research has also documented longstanding racial disparities along most important socio-economic dimensions, including access to healthcare, employment, housing and nutrition, as well as exposure to pollution and other environmental toxins, all of which drive the racial health disparities we observe;

**Whereas**, acute racial disparities are present throughout the criminal justice system, from racial profiling in policing, to arrest, conviction and incarceration rates, including stark statistical evidence that Black men are approximately 2.5 times more likely to be killed by police than white men;

**Whereas**, the tragic murder of George Floyd reignited a movement across the U.S., and now globally, demanding an end to systemic racism within the criminal justice system;

**Whereas**, there is now widespread recognition of the existence of systemic racism, of the fact that systems and institutions in our society produce racially disparate outcomes, regardless of the intentions of the people who work within them;

**Whereas**, registered nurses and other frontline caregivers recognize that every patient is a human being, and is equally entitled to care and compassion;

**Whereas**, as registered nurses we took an oath to safeguard and advocate for the welfare of all our patients, and we cannot fulfill this oath without also addressing the inequalities and broader social determinants of health that threaten their well-being;

**Whereas**, nurses across New York and around the country have spoken out about the very real threats racism poses to the public's health;

**Whereas**, we recognize that "All Lives Matter" can only be true if "Black Lives Matter"; and

**Whereas**, everyone deserves to live in full equality and free from state-sanctioned violence and discrimination;

**Therefore, be it resolved that:**

NYSNA will commit to a program of widespread member education, to understand the history of racial discrimination and exclusion in our profession, as well as the broader society. This internal education program will promote dialogue and understanding among members with different experiences, with the goal of building unity and a shared commitment to racial justice;

NYSNA will press our employers to address racism and discrimination in the workplace, and to improve clinical practices in our health facilities in order to address racial disparities in the access and delivery of care and subsequent health outcomes;

NYSNA will continue to fight to keep hospitals open for care during this pandemic, particularly those serving predominantly Black, Latinx, Asian, and Native communities.

NYSNA will continue to demand Medicare for All at the federal level and the New York Health Act in Albany, recognizing that guaranteed universal healthcare system is a fundamental step toward addressing racial disparities and discrimination in health care.

NYSNA will push state and local lawmakers to concentrate COVID-19 recovery efforts in our hardest hit communities. The only way to address longstanding economic and social disparities across the state is to reverse decades of disinvestment in healthcare, housing, schools, and other vital services.

NYSNA will work to expand social services and public health resources across New York as a necessary step to ensuring that police are not inappropriately forced to respond to situations for which they are untrained and ill-suited and which are more appropriate for trained healthcare and mental health professionals.

NYSNA will also work to promote systemic changes in policing practices and throughout the criminal justice system to address longstanding racial disparities.

NYSNA will take all necessary measures to ensure our organization lives up to these shared values, and that we build a stronger union together, rejecting racism, discrimination, and any other form of bigotry.