In case you haven’t heard...

On top of the pandemic, America has been rocked by the tragedy of the murder of George Floyd, a black man, by police. Protests were worldwide, and many organizations have weighed in to support an end to racially motivated violence. Nora Volkow, M.D., director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, wrote: “Entrenched, systemic, pervasive racism is perpetuated by silence, and we cannot let it continue. I look forward to working with the addiction science community — researchers, the medical community, law enforcement, advocates, policymakers, other stakeholders and the public — to eradicate discrimination and promote equality.” And from Marvin Ventrell, J.D., CEO of the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers: “Most Americans, and disproportionately People of Color, do not have adequate access to quality addiction treatment. We have not done enough to confront the racial and ethnic disparities in treatment access and outcomes. As an industry, we must do more and do better in grappling with social determinants of health and their direct application to recovery from addiction, with a rigorous commitment to inclusivity.” For Volkow’s statement, go to https://www.drugabuse.gov/about-nida/noras-blog/2020/06/message-director-racially-motivated-violence. For Ventrell’s, go to https://www.naatp.org/resources/news/message-naatp-ceo-social-injustice/jun-2-2020. The video of Floyd’s murder was widely circulated and shocked police organizations as well as the treatment field—and everyone. We hope. Next steps will have to include difficult conversations, Volkow said.