



February 10, 2021

To Dr. Jeff Sperring CEO Seattle Children's Hospital
Members of Executive Leadership

For over a decade the **Healthy King County Coalition** has dedicated our focus to programming, education, and advocacy that is rooted in health equity. Seattle Children's has been a key partner with HKCC since our inception in receiving the CPWI grant in 2010. Throughout our history, Seattle Children's has partnered with us on our annual health equity summit, the PICH grant, and currently, as a co-principal of the CDC funded **King County Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health**. We know that as an institution Seattle Children's is familiar with the language, concepts, and social value of health equity. We were disappointed when we learned of the resignation of Dr. Ben Danielson from Odessa Brown. Dr. Ben Danielson has given over 20 years of compassionate and equity-based care to the Seattle Community. He has been highly decorated for his service and is respected for his leadership. Dr. Ben Danielson is a rare community treasure and Seattle Children's failure to respect his contributions to the community brings into question the executive leadership's commitment to social justice and health equity. While Dr. Danielson's allegations of institutional racism are not unique to Seattle Children's, we are disappointed that it has taken so long for Seattle Children's Administration to address the issues that Dr. Danielson has brought to light. **We find Children's unwillingness to swiftly respond to the voices of people of color in their own institution unacceptable.**

Seattle Children's is a national representative in the work to progress health equity, as such, we expect timely and in-depth responses to the types of issues that Dr. Danielson and no doubt other staff of color have brought to the administration over the years. We are aware that Seattle Children's has finally taken measures to address some of the personnel involved in racist behavior. We are also aware that former Attorney General Eric Holder will be conducting an examination of the diversity practices at your institution and that an Assessment Committee has been formed to look at claims of racism. Finally, we are familiar with the town hall meeting held by Odessa Brown which was organized and facilitated by women of color. In general, these responses place the burden on people of color to be the face of an institution that has by all accounts ignored the grievances of people of color. Your response is also rooted in classism. The testimony of your black and brown staff was not sufficient for you to change and now your institution is bringing in highly credentialed people of color to fix a problem that you've created.

As a partner with Seattle Children's on the **King County Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health**, **we expect full transparency on the steps that are being taken to address its institutional racism.** The leadership of Seattle Children's needs to face the community and see the hurt, and disappointment that has resulted from its racism, apathy, and inaction. In the process of self-assessment, we hope that Seattle Children's will center the experiences of Black and Indigenous people. In the coming months and years, we admonish you to engage in the work necessary to regain the trust of the community and your partners. **If Seattle Children's is unwilling to make the changes needed to achieve racial equity within its own walls, we will have to discontinue our relationship.**

Healthy King County Coalition Governance Team