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Letter from the President

June 1, 2020

Dear Faculty, Students, Friends and Staff:

The troubling and unsettling events of the past week and weekend around the country and in our region underscore the need to address structural racism and its resulting health disparities and inequities – both within our institution and in the community-at-large. Dr. Kerschner's and my message to you yesterday reiterated our responsibility to engage actively in dialogue that brings us closer to one another and improves the health and wellbeing of our community. To that end, in the next few weeks we will convene small group conversations during which we will address structural racism, health disparities and inequities that impact the health of our communities. We hope you will join us in this critical dialogue.

And speaking of the health of our communities, you may recall that *Health of our Community* is one of our five institutional priorities for 2020-2025. In my [September 3rd \(2019\) Letter from the President](#), I provided an overview of MCW's 2025 Strategic Framework, which we developed to align our missions and resources towards common goals, set a clear direction for our future, and provide our stakeholders with more insight into strategies for MCW's progress toward 2025. I also shared in more detail the institutional priority of *Health Starts from Within*. In my [November 1st \(2019\) Letter from the President](#), I discussed *Preferred Choice*, and in my [March 2nd Letter from the President](#), I reviewed *Accelerate Discovery*.

The priority of *Health of our Community* encompasses redefining health beyond healthcare through partnership and sustained impact. The goals are to redefine health to include all determinants; and to partner to make a tangible, sustained impact on the health of our community. For fiscal 2020, goal #2 within *Health of our Community* is one of our institutional focus areas as we work to demonstrate commitment to health and economic equity through employment practices that align our workforce to better reflect the populations we serve.

Health of our Community is especially meaningful during the COVID-19 pandemic, as MCW continues to be recognized as an important and trusted source of accurate scientific information throughout the region,

especially in communities that have been neglected. [Last month's Letter from the President](#) focused on how we are reaching people in unprecedented ways and creating allies and advocates throughout the region. The feedback we have received underscores how much our communities need us – now more than ever. Below is a sample of the broad range of comments regarding our outreach from individuals throughout the state:

- *Knowledge is power and helps to keep us as healthy as possible.*
- *Thank you for being warriors on the frontline and helping Milwaukee through this trying time. We need good leaders!*
- *Really good information presented in a calm manner. I appreciate the approach and the willingness of those involved to reach out this way.*
- *There is so much misinformation that it becomes very confusing – and getting the factual information that directly affects our community is very helpful.*
- *I love seeing us all coming together to help each other through these unusual times.*
- *Appreciate the authenticity, down-to-earth perspectives and practices, and leadership.*

MCW also has been advising the business community how to maintain health and safety in the workplace for employees and customers, as Wisconsin begins to reopen our economy. To earn the trust of employees and customers, our faculty have developed a framework, procedures and protocols that minimize the introduction, exposure or spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. Recently, MCW, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) and the Milwaukee 7 Economic Development Partnership, created an [online health and safety toolkit](#) to help businesses identify risks and implement health and safety procedures that will protect their workers and customers. Additionally, the Community Communications Initiative (CCI) was launched to rapidly communicate reliable COVID-19 information and knowledge to the most vulnerable communities in our region, and help stop the spread of the virus. The results of the initiative thus far are media assets that I encourage you to share, including eight [community town halls](#) with MCW faculty and community experts, community [infographics](#) and trusted resources.

Additionally, MCW has launched a comprehensive externally facing online [COVID-19 Resource Center](#), which includes facts and infographics, health and safety information, videos from experts, timely materials from trusted experts, and advise to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

The health of our community, which we believe we can attain through achieving health equity, is a foundational institutional commitment that MCW made many years ago. As noted above, we have invested in partnerships and programs to be a part of the solution. Please bring your voice to the conversation to help us move forward together.

On Friday, May 22, we held our first ever Virtual Commencement Ceremony (our 107th overall) for our Milwaukee-based programs – during which we conferred 192 Doctor of Medicine, 31 Doctor of Philosophy, 12 Master of Science, 15 Master of Medical Physiology and eight Master of Public Health degrees. During the Ceremony, we also celebrated an exciting milestone with the conferral of the Doctor of Pharmacy degree to 41 members of the inaugural class of the MCW School of Pharmacy.

Virtual Commencement Ceremonies were held on Thursday, May 28, for 27 graduates of MCW-Green Bay's third medical school class; and on Friday, May 29, for 25 graduates of MCW-Central Wisconsin's second graduating class. Commencement books, videos and additional information can be found on [MCW's Commencement web page](#). Congratulations and best wishes to all of our graduates!

As we honor our new graduates, I also would like to extend my appreciation to the many dedicated MCW staff members for their outstanding work in creating such memorable ceremonies under unprecedented circumstances. I also am deeply grateful to Dr. George MacKinnon III, Dr. Matt Hunsaker and Dr. Lisa Grill Dodson for their exemplary leadership as Founding Deans of the School of Pharmacy, MCW-Green Bay and MCW-Central Wisconsin, respectively.

I remain very appreciative of the commitment and dedication of our MCW Family during these challenging times and will continue to keep you informed as we move forward with our recovery and reimagine cycles – which are informed by our guiding principles. Please see information on upcoming Town Halls in the Announcements section below.

As always, I welcome your questions and suggestions through [Ask and Tell the President](#). Please remember that during this time of uncertainty, MCW's [Ombuds Office](#) can be a resource for information, referrals and options for handling work-related concerns. You can contact the Office at ombuds@mcw.edu or by calling the confidential line at 414-266-8776. Employee relations concerns also can be shared through the confidential third-party MCW Compliance Reporting Hotline at 1-844-703-8171 or www.mcw.ethicspoint.com.

Best regards,

John R. Raymond, Sr., MD

President and CEO

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