Over the past 30 years that I have worked in human services on 2 continents I have always seen our work through the lens of social justice. One cannot really work in this field without a true understanding of inequities that exist in our society. The past few weeks have once again pulled back the curtain to reveal what has been there all along. The world is a very different place depending on where you live, your income, and the color of your skin.

We feel that as a minority owned employer and an organization that employs many people of color we need to express our support for all of our employees and our persons served, especially those who represent minorities.

Every day of this pandemic we read of the lack of resources in poor communities; how African American and Latinex people are disproportionally represented in the death toll from the coronavirus and it is easy to understand why. Healthcare is not distributed equitably in our society and so many people have to go to work because they have to feed their families. Add this to the fact that testing has not been as available in some areas as other more affluent places and access to healthcare centers is poor in some communities and there you have it. Minority populations suffer more as they are overly represented in those communities.

On top of all of this we have been witnessing the continuation of African American males being killed by vigilante groups and by law enforcement, often met by delayed responses from authorities as if the lives of our black neighbors are worth less than anyone else. As a white male I cannot even begin to imagine what this must be like to experience day to day. One of my friends who is African American once asked me if I ever talked to my teen sons about how to behave if they were stopped by the police in Somerville, where they grew up. I had never even thought about it, which brought home how different the world looks if you are black as opposed to white. My kids have the privilege of not being afraid of the police. I never worried. As a mother of African American boys my friend fretted and worried every time they left her sight.

At BAMSI we want to recognize the additional stress, concern and fear that our staff and friends who are people of color are going through at this very difficult time. We want to recognize how hard it is to deal with the heartbreaking news we have been seeing out of Georgia and Minnesota. We should not know the names of Ahmaud and George but sadly we do and we know that their lives have been snuffed out and that we cannot ignore. We do so at our peril, so please know that BAMSI is committed to being a part of the solution; to move toward a more just, equitable and inclusive society; by working to bring people and services together.

Peter Evers
BAMSI President & Chief Executive Officer