



**Board of Developmental
Disabilities Services**

A Human Services Levy-Funded Agency

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**Joint Statement from the Board of Directors and Leadership of the
Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services**

Respect, inclusion, equality and justice for all are cornerstones of the disability rights movement. As an organization that serves people with developmental disabilities, we value every life and ensure that people of all abilities are treated in accordance with these principles.

Systemic racism and discrimination—specifically against the black community—is a scourge that prevents us from achieving these goals. Yet it’s one we must not only acknowledge, but actively combat.

The killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and others remind us that there are many levels of racism—some obvious, and others that we, as individuals, may not recognize in ourselves. We must examine our attitudes, our behaviors, our worldviews and our practices if we truly wish to eliminate it.

Our agency serves a diverse community. We employ and collaborate with people of all races and backgrounds. It is critical that all of these groups feel valued and included, and that our policies and practices address everyone as equals, with dignity and respect.

Racism and discrimination have no place in our society. The color of one’s skin has no bearing on their value or potential to contribute to humanity, and it should not factor into their treatment by any person or organization. Correcting such injustices will require the concerted efforts of everyone in our agency, our county, our state and our nation. But we cannot look away. We must work together, and stand by each other, to defeat it.

We, as a Board and agency, pledge that we will:

- Encourage and engage in dialogue about the issue of racism and discrimination with stakeholders and the community, and listen and respond
- Examine our own practices to remove racial bias and barriers to equality
- Identify opportunities to promote fairness and equality in all we do
- Continue to work with community partners to foster greater understanding of people of all backgrounds and abilities

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Madeline Iseli'.

Madeline Iseli, Board President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Pamela Combs'.

Dr. Pamela Combs, Superintendent