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**Press Statement from
Horizon Healthcare Partners
Regarding Standing on the Side of Racial Justice**

There are those moments in time, and history, where it is imperative that one must decide on what, and whose, side they stand. Today, the five member agencies (Community Care Alliance, Newport Mental Health, Thrive Behavioral Health, Tides Family Services and CODAC) of Horizon Healthcare Partners (HHP) want to make it crystal clear that we are siding with racial justice and against the systemic racism and oppression that plagues our country.

Racism is not only a public health crisis; it is a behavioral health crisis. The killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and countless others before them, are painful reminders of our country's failure to address the racial injustices that have existed since the days of slavery, through Jim Crow and segregation, to the myriad ways discrimination plays out in housing, education, income and overall quality of life for people of color in our country today.

In order to move forward in any authentic and meaningful way, we must come to terms with our racist past, look honestly and deeply at how racism still exists today, including within our own organizations, and make a decision to behave and act differently, immediately. We must listen to the voices of people of color including hearing about the pain our racism has caused and we must vow to not remain silent, ever again. And most importantly, we must sit in the discomfort that it will require standing with, and for, people of color.

"I can't breathe," were the final words of George Floyd. Let those words be a painful reminder of the cost of our inaction and let it inspire us to do better, to do different, to actively fight for the change that will allow all Americans to breathe equally.

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