



**Tigerlily
Foundation**
Beauty. Strength. Transformation.

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National Patient Advocacy Organizations Band Together for #InclusionPledge to Ensure Equity for Black Women

National breast cancer patient advocacy organizations frustrated by the lack of measurable action taken to improve healthcare equity and access for women of color, come together to sign the #InclusionPledge.

Washington, DC, June 11, 2020 - In the midst of a global pandemic, as the entire country grapples with the actions that led to the death of George Floyd and the racial turmoil that has now risen to the surface, national breast cancer patient organizations come together in unity, committing to work together on an unprecedented health equity initiative focusing on diversity, inclusion, and eliminating disparities for black women.

Recent world events highlight the systemic racism that runs deep and affects every aspect of the lives of people of color. As an organization dedicated to ending disparities in our lifetime, Tigerlily Foundation recognizes that in order to end health disparities, we must see change in those people and systems that show inherent disregard for life, which cannot go unaddressed. Change must occur by holding those accountable - who either by action or inaction - contribute to the loss of life for people of color.

The facts are startling - black women are often diagnosed at later stages when treatments are limited, costly and the prognosis is poor; black women are often diagnosed at younger ages and have more aggressive breast cancer; have 40% higher mortality rate; and Black women have 39% recurrence rate.

“Race, literacy, financial barriers, access, social, systemic and hereditary backgrounds should not be determinants of life and health equity. In order to continue to accelerate and make an impact as it relates to disparities and black women, the #inclusionpledge is imperative. As an organization, Tigerlily Foundation was founded to address inequity – of age, of stage and of color. We have invested significantly in addressing disparities affecting black women – to ensure that women of color are equal partners at every table and will continue to do so. We band together with our colleagues and friends to launch the #inclusionpledge to advocate for and activate the inclusion of women of color across initiatives impacting their breast and overall health.” – Maimah Karmo, President, [Tigerlily Foundation](https://www.tigerlilyfoundation.org).

The #inclusionpledge was developed and provides a transparent and tangible framework across stakeholder sectors, which will identify and track equity actions, holding all involved accountable. This will result in measurable and improved equity and outcomes for women of color.

“Tigerlily’s Inclusion Pledge is an important catalyst for change. Breastcancer.org wholeheartedly believes in promoting health equity and working to eliminate disparities for black women. Skin color should never be a barrier to receiving the best breast cancer information, care, and resources. The unity across organizations will ensure that women of color are represented, and we will all come together to dismantle systemic racism. Breastcancer.org is honored to join with other advocacy partners to firmly uphold the principles of the pledge.” - Hope Wohl, CEO, [Breastcancer.org](https://www.breastcancer.org)

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“Living Beyond Breast Cancer is proud to support the Tigerlily Foundation in its Diversity and Inclusion pledge and in partnering on additional actions and activities that address the challenges of racism in our systems and communities. We see directly, the impact of racism in breast cancer, where black women are 40% more likely to die of their disease than white women, and yet again today with the uneven distribution of disease burden in COVID-19. We share Tigerlily’s long-term commitment to bringing about needed change and commend our partner on its past and current leadership on health disparities. We are eager to get back to work with renewed passion and commitment” - Jean Sachs, CEO, [Living Beyond Breast Cancer](#).

“Systemic racism contributes to health disparities. FORCE stands in solidarity with Black people and Black communities who, in addition to fighting hereditary cancer, continue to live with the daily reality of racial injustice and violence. We are proud to sign on to Tigerlily Foundation’s inclusion pledge and continue to work together with all our partners to improve health equity and health outcomes.” - Sue Friedman, DVM, Executive Director, [Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered](#)

“As an advocate and business owner in the breast cancer community, I know exactly how important it is that different voices and diagnosis are shared. There is not one singular voice to breast cancer because cancer does not discriminate. AnaOno has taken the pledge to not only drive awareness and education to our Black and African American communities members that are dying at disproportionate rates in comparison to their white counterparts, but are also diagnosed younger and with more aggressive cancers. We must close this gap, and we can help by sharing the lives of those that are afflicted by this disease in our marketing, our events, and conferences. When you see someone that looks like you, you can imagine it being you.” – Dana Donofree, Founder, [AnaOno](#)

“We are fully committed to collaborate with Tigerlily and other like organizations to forward our shared vision of eliminating healthcare system disparities that exist for people of color. In all we do, the patient comes first, and we will continue to raise the patient voice in this regard.” - Esther Schorr, Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer, [Patient Power](#)

“The National Breast Center Foundation has always been committed to providing access for all women to screening and treatment for breast cancer. We stand with Tigerlily and other organizations in rising up against disparities in care based on skin color.” - Martha Carucci, Executive Director, [National Breast Center Foundation](#)

"Sharsheret stands united against racism in any form and we join together to ensure a healthier and brighter future for all women touched by breast cancer." – Adina Fleischmann, LSW, Director of Support Programs, [Sharsheret](#)

“Being Black means always standing in your power.” – Angela (Jersi) Baker, Founder, [Angel in Disguise](#)

“It is incumbent upon us all, especially those of us whose privilege is built on the oppression of others, to share the burden of ending health disparities and inequities for black and brown communities that are disproportionately impacted by cancer. As white women living with cancer who have a voice in advocacy with the scientific community, and the private and public sectors, we pledge to ONLY involve ourselves in initiatives that also include the black voice and other people of color.” – Julia Maues and Christine Hodgdon, Co-Founders, [GRASP](#)

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“METAvivor fully supports the recent movement by the #BlackLivesMatter protesters. We stand resolute with our black patients, supporters, family, friends, and allies. This week, in lieu of our typical content, and in support of #BlackLivesMatter, METAvivor believes strongly that it is essential for us to share important information and resources about organizations dedicated to the specific challenges women and men of color with metastatic breast cancer are facing. While our mission will always be funding the latest, cutting-edge metastatic breast cancer research, we also have a strong commitment to social justice, while promoting inclusion and equity for people of color, specifically within the breast cancer community. There is systemic racial discrimination, especially in the health care system and it is evidenced by national statistics that support racial disparities in metastatic breast cancer. METAvivor commits to signing and fully supporting the Tigerlily Foundation Inclusion Pledge; adding inclusion of people of color in leadership positions within METAvivor including adding two people of color to our Board of Directors and creating a new liaison to the black metastatic breast cancer patient community; creating programming specially targeted to metastatic women and men of color; seeking funding to provide educational conferences for metastatic women and men of color; and funding research that addresses racial disparities in metastatic breast cancer medical treatment.” – Sonya Negley, Executive Director, [Metavivor](#)

Organizations globally are invited to join us in advocate for change by signing the #inclusionpledge. For us to end disparities in our lifetimes, every industry/system that affects or can affect the mortality rates of women of color must commit and be accountable. Visit Tigerlily Foundation’s [website](#) to learn how you can collaborate with us to make a difference.

Pledge partners and collaborators include AnaOno Intimates, Angel in Disguise, BreastCancer.org, Breast Cancer Alliance, Diverse Health Hub, Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered, GRASP, For Three Sisters, Living Beyond Breast Cancer, Mend Together, Metavivor, National Breast Center Foundation, Patient Power, Sharsheret, SHARE, Triage Cancer, Unity Worldwide Ministries and 2 for 2 Boobs.

History: At the 2019 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium, several advocates made an #inclusionpledge. The inclusion pledge originated with Angela “Jersi” Baker, (an African American metastatic breast cancer advocate and Founder of Angel in Disguise), Julia Mauers and Christine Hodgdon, Co-Founders of [GRASP](#). Julia and Christine felt that as “white women living with metastatic breast cancer, [we] engage in advocacy to allow people with cancer to live longer and better lives. In this role, we get our voices heard by writing articles, speaking on panels, participating in advisory boards or reviewing grants. We have always seen ourselves as allies to people of color and thought it was unacceptable that certain population groups experience disparities in cancer outcomes. We decided that “not being ok” with something this terrible wasn’t enough! We had to act.” The [#inclusionpledge](#) was created shortly after. Other founding members of the pledge include Sheila McGlown, Tomika Bryant, LaTonya Davis, Dana Donofree, Ricki Fairley, Valencia Robinson, Jamil Rivers and Tiah Tomlin

About Tigerlily Foundation: Tigerlily Foundation is a national breast cancer organization whose mission is to educate, empower, support, and advocate for young women ages 15 to 45 before, during, and after breast cancer. Tigerlily Foundation is dedicated to ending disparities of age, stage and color; and works to end disparities of age, stage or color. To learn more, visit <http://tigerlilyfoundation.org>, follow on Twitter @TigerlilyCares, on Instagram at Tigerlily_Foundation and on Facebook at TigerlilyFoundation.

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