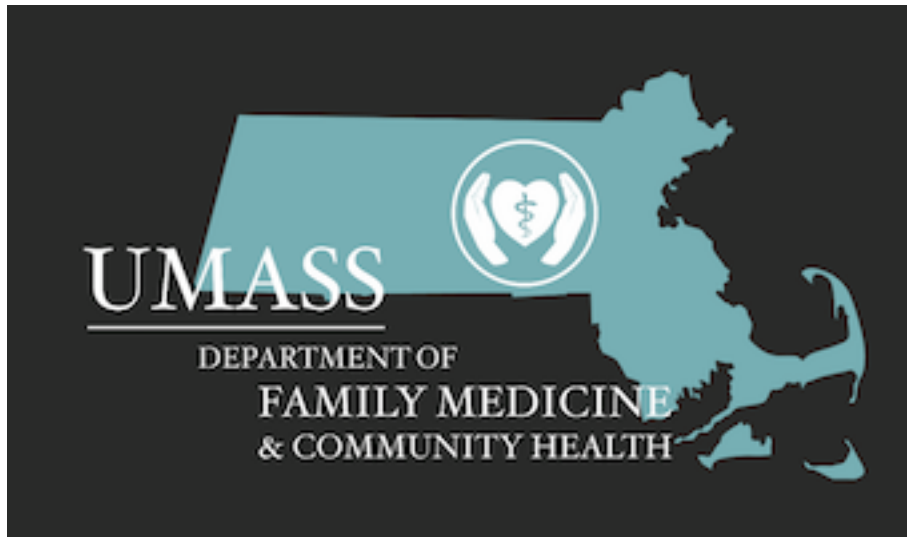


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In Honour of Juneteenth

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Family Medicine Moments

June 23, 2022

In honour of Juneteenth, Jennifer Bradford, director of our department's diversity and inclusion efforts, medical director of the Community Healthlink Detox Program (and many other roles), has written a powerful piece that reminds us that profound inequity and unjust issues still exist on the 157th anniversary of Juneteenth. She challenges us to consider what we can do in our roles, in our lives, to make things better. And she reminds us what this special day means to her - a very different reality than my own. Which is a place for each of us to begin. Listening. Thank you Jen.

In Honour of Juneteenth

African Americans have a long history of our bodies and livelihoods not belonging to ourselves that exists even today. We were easily sold like the cattle that is mentioned at the end of this "Negroes for Sale" announcement. Juneteenth, which is observed on June 19th, is a day that represents when those enslaved in Texas learned, on June 19, 1865, that slavery had ended almost two and a half years prior. Imagine having to live life just 1 more day in which you lived as a commodity with no free will.

In my life, Juneteenth is a day of commemoration rather than celebration. It is a time in which African Americans can reflect on our ancestors' unimaginable challenges, but also triumph in knowing that despite the inhumane treatment received, we were able to find song, family, and love to survive and rise.

The chains of slavery have slowly been released and we are left with racism that is deeply embedded in our society and psyche. Let us have Juneteenth to be one of the ways we ask ourselves how we can do better to be the catalyst for equity, opportunity, and forward progress to undo racism. There are many opportunities to do so, such as supporting "The Village" which

is an Afrocentric Community Center on 4 King Street in Worcester. They have shared the “Negroes for Sale” announcement as a blunt reminder of our history that we should never forget, but also to spark a fire for us to continue to push forward to making our community inclusive for all.



Image: Replica of 1848 slavery auction poster on display at Michigan Street Baptist Church in Buffalo, New York (Image via [The Philadelphia Tribune](#)).

Keywords: Juneteenth, African Americans, racism