



TOMÁS J. ARAGÓN, MD, DrPH
Director and State Public Health Officer

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor

March 22, 2021

Dear CDPH Family and Friends,

Racism continues to be a public health crisis. The tragic events in Atlanta on March 16th are the latest in a year of horrific racist attacks on the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since last March, there have been 3,795 reports of hate incidents targeting Asian-Americans nationwide, of which 68% were reported by women, according to Stop AAPI Hate.¹ These have included homicides, assaults, and instances of harassment or vandalism against AAPI individuals, businesses, and communities. The Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University reports that racially motivated crimes against those of Asian descent in the U.S. have risen 149% in the pandemic year of 2020.² Sadly, public and political discourse has promoted divisions rather than understanding and healing.³

Like most of you, our personal and professional lives have been turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic for the past year. And yet, these events remind us that many in our communities face multiple threats from COVID-19 as well as racism and poverty. There is an urgent need for increased vigilance to identify and act against anti-AAPI racism, at all times including when we discuss COVID-19.

As the California Department of Public Health community, we are committed to fighting racism and white supremacy in all of its forms, including anti-AAPI racism, and to creating a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and healing department, communities, and state.

Additionally, our staff may be experiencing additional stresses, discrimination, or psychological trauma from these increases in discrimination and hate crimes. For assistance or support please contact [State of California Human Resources](#)

¹ <https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.69.231/a1w.90d.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/210312-Stop-AAPI-Hate-National-Report-.pdf>

² <https://www.csusb.edu/sites/default/files/FACT%20SHEET-%20Anti-Asian%20Hate%202020%203.2.21.pdf>

³ <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.2021.306154>



[Employee Assistance Program](#). To report an incident contact CivilRights@cdph.ca.gov or Workplace-Violence@cdph.ca.gov.

We look forward to working with all members of the CDPH community on promoting and ensuring equity and antiracism in the workplace and in communities throughout California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tomás Aragón". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH
Director & State Public Health Officer
California Department of Public Health