

December 28, 2020

Dr. Jeff Sperring, Chief Executive Officer
Seattle Children's
4800 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98105

Dear Dr. Sperring:

We are writing to address the sudden and uncharacteristic departure of Dr. Benjamin Danielson from his position as Senior Medical Director of Seattle Children's Odessa Brown Children's Clinic and Western Region, and a disturbing account of his experience at Seattle Children's that recently has become public.

We have known Dr. Danielson in various aspects of his illustrious career of nearly 30 years – as a highly-honored clinician and professor, tireless advocate for the wellbeing of underserved children and families, respected visionary of a comprehensive approach to community health, valued advocate for equity, inclusion and the “community's voice” and an outspoken activist against systemic racism. He sits on important boards of statewide significance and is recognized nationally as one of the most esteemed African American males in his field. He was the only high-ranking African American male at Seattle Children's. Consequently, his abrupt separation from the Hospital is troubling.

Dr. Danielson's explanation for his departure, ironically before the imminent fulfillment of his vision for a new expanded OBCC, contradicts Seattle Children's account that it was only “personal choice”. Revelations of institutional racism that marginalized Dr. Danielson; “a culture of unaccountability, murky decision making, poor communication, favoritism and retaliation”, and the protection of a leader in the Hospital who used “language of racism and misogyny” are shocking and need to be addressed immediately.

We also are aware that Dr. Danielson's leaving closely follows the sudden departure of two other long-time clinicians of color in leadership positions at OBCC. Circumstances which have added to questions now being raised about Seattle Children's commitment to: equity and inclusiveness; supporting BIPOC communities and the historic mission of OBCC; effective clinic leadership; and the initiatives Dr. Danielson and his colleagues have championed.

To address the aforementioned issues, we are requesting two things: 1) Seattle Children's Board of Trustees appoint an independent external legal firm to convene and oversee an ad hoc committee, including Board of Trustee members and external stakeholders, to investigate the allegations of racism in Dr. Danielson's letter to OBCC staff (attached) and 2) a virtual meeting with you to discuss how Seattle Children's will address the aforementioned concerns regarding the Hospital's commitment to Odessa Brown Children's Clinic.

We represent donors and other concerned people in this community, region and state, and on their behalf are asking you to provide answers as soon as possible. The seriousness of our concerns requires more than a written statement.

We are requesting a virtual meeting the first week of January. We look forward to hearing from you regarding a suitable date and time.

Respectfully,

Justice Bobbe Bridge, Ret. & Jon Bridge; Zan Brookshire & Bert Green, MD; Vicki Giles Fabr ; Micki & Robert Flowers; Dana Frank; Former King County Councilman Larry Gossett; Tricia Davis & Ben Haggerty (AKA Macklemore); Maxine Hayes, MD, MPH, FAAP; Carmen Gayton & Carver Gayton PhD; Wanda Herndon; Winky & Peter Hussey; Lori Langston; Dorothy Holland Mann PhD, MPH; Suzanne Sinegal McGill & T.J. McGill; Molly Nordstrom; Gloria & George Northcroft; Laurie Oki; Srilata Remala; Eddie & Andrea Rye; Jacqueline Sherris, PhD & Peter Rabinovitch, MD, PhD; Jan & Jim Sinegal; King County Councilman Girmay Zahilay; Rajeev Singh; Marilyn & Lenny Wilkens