



IBLCE Stands in Solidarity with the African-American Community and in Support of Health Equity

In the aftermath of the tragic and senseless deaths of Rayshard Brooks, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many other African Americans, the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners® (IBLCE®) stands in solidarity with the African-American community, as well as Indigenous People and People of Colour around the globe.

IBLCE, as a certification board devoted to the health and safety of breastfeeding families through the certification of lactation professionals, stands for equality and the promotion of equitable health outcomes for all.

These numerous documented instances of grave racial injustices against African Americans, coupled with the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on People of Colour, have laid bare long-standing and deep-seated inequities with respect to the health and safety of far too many.

Both as individuals and as an organisation committed to public health, safety, and equality, the IBLCE Board stands in solidarity particularly with African Americans in the United States at this painful time. IBLCE calls upon health and justice systems around the world to work towards equity and justice for all. However, it is important for organisations not just to talk, but to *act*.

In 2016, IBLCE first established and committed funding to the Emerging Leaders in Lactation Scholarship Programme through the affiliated Monetary Investment for Lactation Consultant Certification organisation (MILCC). IBLCE established this scholarship programme in the spirit of fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion among the community of International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) candidates and future leaders. The first cohort of Emerging Leaders in Lactation, selected in 2017, are from diverse backgrounds from around the world and work with diverse clients. To date, half of the Emerging Leaders Scholars have earned the IBCLC.

As a commitment to standing in solidarity with the African-American community and reducing health inequities through the certification of lactation professionals actively working to promote public health, IBLCE is providing funding to MILCC to establish the Dr. Clifton Kenon Jr. Scholarship. Each year for the next five years, the new Dr. Clifton Kenon Jr. Scholarship will provide funding for the IBCLC examination to five professionals who primarily provide lactation care to African-American clients.

The scholarship is named in honour of Dr. Clifton Kenon Jr., who has played a key leadership role with IBLCE over the past six years and is a subject matter expert in the diversity and inclusion field, currently serving as the Senior Diversity & Inclusion Officer with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which promotes global health.

Among many other significant accomplishments on behalf of IBLCE and the lactation community, Dr. Kenon has served two terms as IBLCE Treasurer, led the initiative to update the IBLCE bylaws and policies, and is an impactful and dedicated IBLCE representative to the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee (USBC). An IBCLC since 2009, he consistently demonstrates exemplary leadership and is an outstanding advocate on behalf of lactation. Further details on this scholarship will be made available in advance of the September 2021 examination application period.

IBLCE stands in solidarity with the African-American community and, through this new scholarship programme, commits to providing greater opportunity to those working to ameliorate health disparities and promote maternal and child health among African Americans.

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