

## **2019 Joint Statement - The New Jersey Inter-Mental Health and Psychological Associations Coalition (IMPAC) Recognizes the 400th Anniversary of the first Africans who arrived in 1619, ushering in the Era of American Slavery**

*by IMPAC - the New Jersey Association of Black Psychologists (NJABPsi), the Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey (LMHANJ) and the New Jersey Psychological Association (NJPA)*

In 1619, the first twenty Africans were forcibly taken from Africa and brought to Jamestown, Virginia, to be used as slaves. This set into motion 250 years of human chattel slavery and was followed by nearly another 100 years of Black Codes, Jim Crow, and lawful race-based violent oppression. It is widely accepted that much of the early economic growth and development of this country was the direct result of the widespread use of slavery. It is painfully apparent that while the Civil Rights Act of 1964 intended to outlaw race-based discrimination, today we stand in the wake of yet another 50 years of oppression largely due to structural racism, a modern form of racial oppression that psychologically shackles the propensity toward self-determination in the same way that the chains of chattel slavery fettered physical freedom.

As psychologists, social workers, professional counselors, and other mental health professionals it is crucial in our roles as healers, and researchers to develop a deep understanding of the emotional, psychological, and physical consequences of this legacy. The New Jersey Association of Black Psychologists (NJABPsi), the Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey (LMHANJ) and the New Jersey Psychological Association (NJPA) recognize the intergenerational and interpersonal trauma caused by the heritage of slavery and by the inequalities that continue to exist. Together as equals, IMPAC stands in remembrance of those who suffered from slavery and the vicissitudes of slavery. We maintain hope and commitment that the next 400 years will be wrought with healing, equality, justice, and freedom for all.