

Justice for Augie Gonsalez

We are so humbled and grateful to be invited here by Augie's mother, Karla Gonsalez to stand with you all. We join you in mourning your son and stand alongside you to fight for justice for him.

To the City Councillors, we are here as health workers (a physician and medical student), and as members representing Do No Harm, a coalition of over 200 health workers fighting for an end police brutality and other forms of state violence.

We are here to stand with the family of Agustin Gonsalez. We are grieved and enraged by his unjust death. We demand accountability. We demand an independent, unbiased investigation of this violent act. We demand for the officers who killed him to be removed from the force.

The circumstances of Augie's death at the hands of Hayward police are deeply troubling. Although he was having a mental health crisis, and needed compassionate support and mental health care, instead he was met with bullets. Instead of Augie's family being met with compassion, deep regret, and transparency from the Hayward Police Department, they have had to fight for every detail they have been told, even the name of the hospital where their son passed away.

And we want to call the council's attention to the layers of repercussions that this murder has on the entire community. Police brutality is a kind of terrorism. Just as an act of terrorism does not only affect the victim, the family, and those who knew the victim, these acts affect everyone who identifies with this victim, everyone who feels terror for themselves, their loved ones because they see in Augie their own loved ones.

Tragically, we know that Augie's death is part of a much larger trend of police killings, that disproportionately impact people of color and people with mental illness in this country. People with mental illness are 16 more likely to be killed by police than other people. At the same time, the experience of terror that communities experience leads to further mental illness, including post traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety. There is a vicious cycle here that needs to be broken.

As healers and as scientists we are here to emphasize what everyone in this community already knows - that if this council and city fail to recognize this act as murder, if you

stand with the officers who deployed their weapons and condone their actions, there are consequences for the health of the entire community.

Health is a human right and as health workers we have a collective duty to eradicate systems of oppression which threaten that right. We stand with Gonsalez family today in horror, in grief, and in a demand for justice and accountability.