

Dear Friend,

Normally, I would be sending an email to you welcoming the start of summer and the kick-off of Pride Month. In a normal June, Champions at Vivent Health would be at Pride events in our communities conducting testing and outreach or collecting food for our pantries feeding thousands of our patients and clients. While **Pride Month has always been solemnly steeped in the fight against oppression of LGBT people with remembrance of Stonewall, theres no mistaking its normally also a joyous celebration of diversity, friendship and love in overcoming the wedges that drive us apart.**

With Covid-19 and the murder of George Floyd and the ensuing protests, this year is far from normal. And honestly, **I hope we never go back to normal.**

Too many people in our communities experience an every-day normal filled with injustice - racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, educational, health care and economic injustice. Todays protests lay bare the injustice people of color have faced every day for the last 400 years. The uncomfortable truth is that the Covid-19 and HIV pandemics are fueled by these same injustices. **The racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and HIV stigma that we have refused to acknowledge that our normal is literally killing our friends who are people of color and members of the LGBT community.** It is a normal I can live without.

**I cant remember a time in my lifetime when we have needed Pride more than right now.** And I am heartbroken that the flags, parades, festivals and gatherings that have normally welcomed summer will not be there this year.

**This year to celebrate Pride, I hope you will join with inspiration from the activists at Stonewall and the Civil Rights Movement in taking action in your community to snatch justice from injustice.** It was these brave agitators who in the face of brutality and prejudice stood firmly on their ground to fight back against oppression. And while victories have been won, the battle isnt over.

**Lets celebrate this year by continuing the fight** so that everyone regardless of who they love, the color of their skin, where they live or how little money they have is treated with respect, provided care and embraced in our communities.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Gifford  
Vivent Health President & Chief Executive Officer