



Together in Solidarity.

I've been reflecting on the tragic events unfolding around our country related to racism. Race is such a hard thing to talk about. Speaking at our town hall on Monday, I realized our new virtual reality makes it even harder to connect with our black colleagues, to ask how they are doing, to express empathy, understanding and support.

To our black and African American colleagues, customers patients: I cannot pretend to understand what this feels like for you. But I can stand with you, your families and communities and bear witness. Racial inequality and the structural racism that perpetuates it remains a real and pressing issue for our country, and that means all of us.

It's especially difficult for me to process these recent events on top of the disparity we're seeing daily within our healthcare system. We all look at data that shows people of color impacted by COVID-19 in disproportionate numbers across the U.S.

We hear facts as to why. Communities of color are more likely to have pre-existing conditions, live in denser areas and work in essential services – meaning that these communities have seen more deaths from COVID-19. But only now, after the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and countless others are we truly reckoning with the structural racism that is the real underlying cause.

The video of George Floyd shook me first because I am a mom. Any parent who sees violence thinks about how much they want to protect their own children from physical and emotional harm. Like many, I continued to reflect and think about what I saw, and my level of understanding deepened, layer by layer, as I learned the many different messages that were expressed in that 8 minutes and 46 seconds.

And this is only one of many similar stories about what's been happening across our country. I can't look away because these issues impact our employees, our customers, our patients, our communities, our society. Our families.

Over the last few days I've talked with my black and African American colleagues at Takeda. I am grateful and humbled by the willingness of this community to share the painful and raw truth of their experiences with me and help me think about what I can do.

I learned that silence is not a solution – ever. I heard that not acknowledging what a black person is going through right now makes them feel unseen, invisible. And that our black and African American colleagues are searching for more faces like theirs in our workplace. And in our corporate world, that many of our black colleagues have just learned over time to become comfortable feeling uncomfortable. It made me wonder how many other colleagues may be feeling the same way.

I heard that as a company we aren't fully serving communities of color, where customers who need our support and patients who need our medicines may not have the access they need. And I heard that our employees want Takeda to go beyond diversity and inclusion within the company. They need us to step up and support social justice and equality in our communities. And to seek the right partners who can help us do that.

Now it is my responsibility to honor their words through thoughtful action, and to ensure this isn't a knee-jerk response that ends next month.

The first step is so simple. We must reach out to our black and African American employees, customers and patients to check in and let them know we support them. Just as we do when someone has a baby, suffers a death in the family or loses a home to fire – we reach out. We can't let ourselves remain silent because we are afraid to say the wrong thing.

As a company, we can take immediate steps to ensure everyone has equal access to our medicines and support programs. And find ways to hire, train and communicate more purposefully to encourage both diversity and inclusion. We can think about how we engage all our Takeda Resource Groups more effectively, real time, to help us support our employees, customers, patients and communities.

There is no question we have a lot more work to do – both individually and collectively. But, as I learned in my conversations over the past few days, if we take the time to listen, we will discover that like our black employees, the solutions are right in front of us -- waiting to be seen.

And that gives me hope that we will move forward, in a sustainable way, together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ramon Sequera". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.