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HUMAN RESOURCES

DATE: June 30, 2021
TO: Covenant Health staff
FROM: Elaine Watson, Chief Human Resources Officer
RE: Reflection on Canada Day

July 1 is a day many Canadians typically gather with friends and family to participate in activities that celebrate the gift of our country. This year is different.

The stark reality is that historic and ongoing racism exists in our country. It is manifesting in the discovery of close to 1,000 unmarked graves at the site of two former Indian Residential Schools, as well as in the attacks on people of the Muslim faith in our communities. These situations have raised awareness that Canada Day celebrations ring hollow for many who feel marginalized and unseen.

While some have called for the end of Canada Day celebrations, others are encouraging us to use the day to promote and improve dialogue and awareness. Across Canada tomorrow, radio stations will host *A Day to Listen* – a full day of Indigenous-led programming and conversation to amplify Indigenous voices and grow together in understanding. Other jurisdictions are using the day to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities together to listen and learn from one another.

Covenant is also called to a deeper place of listening and response. There is work for us to do to create the welcoming, inclusive and respectful environment we desire. In humility, we can all do better.

We encourage you to find your own place of comfort in celebrating Canada Day. Perhaps there is room to reframe the focus of the day to allow celebration of the strengths of our nation while recognizing the sobering and difficult reality of our history and present challenges.

We must dedicate ourselves to the path of reconciliation as a country and as an organization. This is an opportunity to commit ourselves to improving our relationship with the Indigenous community and dedicate ourselves to respect, inclusion, equity and compassion for those we serve and those who serve alongside us.

However you choose to mark the July 1 holiday, we wish each of you a restful and reflective day with those you love.