

Date: March 23, 2021
To: House Committee on Rules
Re: In Support of HB 2337

Chair Smith-Warner, Vice Chairs Drazen and Holvey, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Zainab Alidina. I am a board member of Health Care for All Oregon (HCAO) and representing HCAO today. HCAO stands in strong support of HB2337 and requests that this Committee does the same.

HB 2337 declares racism as a public health crisis in Oregon. Racism causes harm, trauma, illness, and death to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) Oregonians. HB 2337 acknowledges that Oregon's very founding as a state was rooted in racist ideals, and the damaging impact of these and other racist policies continue to exist within our present-day policies and systems. Further, this bill signals the need for accelerated, intentional actions to heal these injustices and articulates six initial strategies and investments to address health inequities.

Racism is pervasive and is integrated into every institution and system that is connected to the social determinants of health, and ultimately impacts Oregonian's ability to be healthy and well to the fullest potential. Incidents of racism consistently experienced by Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities and Tribes create racial disparities in social, health, economic, legal, and academic outcomes.

Racism is the reason why COVID-19 has hit communities of color harder. In Oregon, Latinos represent nearly 40% of COVID-19 cases, despite the fact that they only comprise about 13% of the population. (Oregon Health Authority, 2020. COVID-19 Weekly Report: October 14, 2020).

As health advocates, we assert that this issue is not about politics. This issue is about people's lives and their health, and the fact that people are dying far earlier than they should, and that we must do a much better job of preventing that.

HB 2337 was developed by the Oregon Health Equity Task Force which is composed of leaders and community-based organizations representing BIPOC, Tribal, and Immigrant and Refugee communities and includes six initial strategies that are responsive to the specific needs of their communities to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities.

1. Expand and support the collection of REAL-D data
2. Meaningfully invest in community engagement to identify future strategies
3. Health Equity Policy Analyst to disrupt policy from maintaining racist outcomes
4. Increase health equity through language access

HCAO works for an equitable, affordable, comprehensive, high-quality, publicly funded universal health care system serving everyone in Oregon and the United States.



5. Increase community voice in the legislative process
6. Remove barriers to increase access and quality of care in BIPOC communities

Health Care for All Oregon urges every member of this Committee to vote yes in support HB 2337. Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Sincerely,

Zainab Alidina, Board Member
Health Care for All Oregon

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