

March 23, 2021

Good afternoon Chair Smith Warner, Vice Chairs Drazen and Holvey,

My name is Elva Sipin and I am here today representing PeaceHealth, and it is a pleasure to be before you this afternoon to support the important declaration contained in HB 2337.

As American scientist George Washington Carver wisely said, “where there is no vision, there is no hope”.

I’m honored to represent PeaceHealth. I’m here today to share that we found hope in the form of the vision presented via Oregon House Bill 2337 – hope that is grounded in building a foundation to officially denounce Oregon’s long-standing history that is deeply rooted in racism. Declaring racism as a public health crisis in Oregon is a progressive and important first step for the long road ahead that will require healing and meaningful action for our state. Additionally, many of us have seen the recent events surrounding the rise in violence against Asian Americans, this is yet another perverse example of how racism and hate continues to infiltrate our communities. As a Filipino American woman and having been in healthcare leadership for over twenty years, I have learned the importance of communicating our purpose to inspire and influence change.

As a 130-year-old Catholic healthcare system, PeaceHealth is committed to social justice - one of our four Core Values. With that, we continually and actively work toward racial justice to ensure we are dismantling and not perpetuating racism and inequity. It’s important to highlight a sampling of the commitments to equity that PeaceHealth has embraced. For instance, we are:

- Participating in the Catholic Health Association’s Health Equity Pledge, which has four focus areas: COVID-19 equity, enacting change across our own health system (e.g. hiring practices, business operations and accountability), strengthening trust with minority communities we are privileged to serve and advocating for improved health outcomes for minority communities/populations .
- Building trust and relationships with our communities of color while advocating for changes to healthcare and all aspects of society that perpetuate systemic racism and inequity.
- Creating access to culturally and linguistically specific COVID-19 vaccine clinics for BIPOC, immigrant and refugee communities.
- Actively improving ways for collecting Race, Ethnicity, Language, Disability (REALD) data respectfully from our patients to help Oregon understand which communities are most impacted by COVID-19.
- Increasing health equity through comprehensive language services.
- Socializing the recently launched Strides for Social Justice program in partnership with the Eugene Marathon, an inclusive, family-friendly mobile app that engages and educates



participants on the contributions, achievements and milestones of Black residents within our community.

- Cultivating antiracist community health programs as a financial and operational supporter of Live Healthy Lane, a formal partnership comprised of key stakeholders, Lane Community Health Council, Lane County Public Health, Trillium Community Health Plan, PacificSource and United Way of Lane County that oversees the periodic assessment of health issues and needs in Lane County and the development and implementation of the Community Health Improvement Plan.

Consistent with our PeaceHealth Value of Social Justice, we know we must lean into this work toward racial justice. It is not enough for us to be non-racist; we must be anti-racist, where we commit to a conscious decision to make frequent, consistent, equitable, unbiased choices. These choices require ongoing self-awareness reflection and deliberate actions. This means that we must identify the structures, practices and beliefs that uphold racism and address them within our organization and our communities.

We can't do this alone or in a silo. It will take all of us to embrace this mission-critical work. The power lies in a unified statewide recognition of racism as a public health crisis. More than that, it also requires allocation of resources and support for local communities seeking to finally see an end to the deeply rooted racism that permeates our state and nation. The work ahead will not be easy, but through the declarations made in this House Bill we will see light and hope for future filled with respect, inclusivity and holistic social justice. The time is now or we risk losing the momentum needed and our history will continue to remain on repeat.

I came across an article that states "Social justice has the biggest impact on the marginalized groups in our communities. If we want to be those that show care for people in need we have to care about the policies, systems and actions that are common in our society." These words resonate my personal passion for standing in the gap for the oppressed and marginalized. On behalf of PeaceHealth, please honor and consider our plea to support HB 2337. Thank you for your time and consideration.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ESIPIN', with a small checkmark above the 'I'.

Elva Sipin

Vice President of Operations

PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at
RiverBend