

Date: 3/23/2021

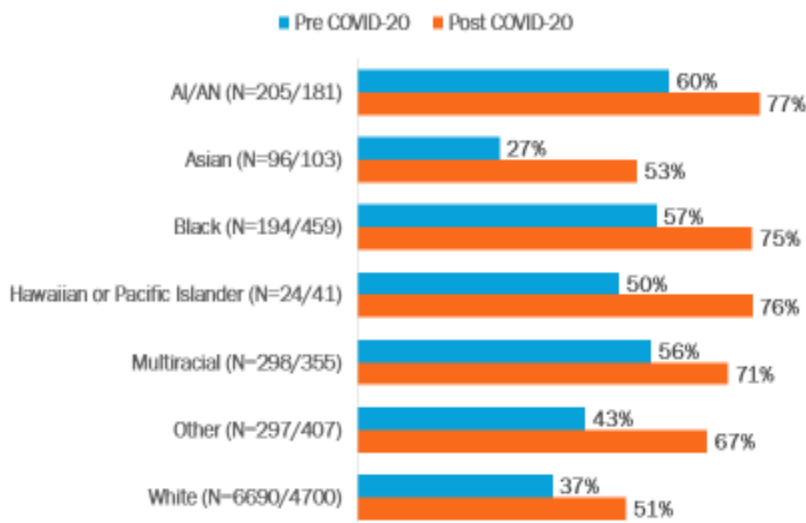
Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Lynn Knox I am Statewide Health Care Liaison at Oregon Food Bank. I am writing to request your support for **HB2337**, declaring racism as a public health issue.

Health disparities leave no doubt about the impact of individual and systemic racism on Oregonians of color. People of color experience:

- Lower life expectancy than whites
- Higher rates of chronic disease than whites
- 3-4 time more pregnancy & birth complications for moms of color
- Higher numbers without health insurance
- Significantly higher infection rates of Covid-19
- Higher rates of death by police and greater incarceration rates than whites
- Significant health impacting stress due to living in a society where skin color impacts all facets of your life
- Every social determinant of health (80% of our health) is significantly impacted by racism as documented below in the Oregon Accountable Health Communities screening project

## Disparities – Unmet needs by Race



Percent of Patients with Social Need (Medicaid and Medicare)

• March Analysis: Pre-COVID-19 March 22, 2020, Post-COVID-19 March 23, 2020



If we don't acknowledge the impact of racism in all its forms on health, we won't address it and the problems will continue. The work to build a healthier community takes a reexamination of our policies and behaviors on many fronts, new types of investments and a deep commitment to an Oregon where everyone can thrive.

Oregon Food Bank's mission is to eliminate hunger and its root causes. We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today; and we build community power to dismantle systems and policies that drive hunger and poverty. Systemic racism is a driver of hunger.

Thank you for your time, please support HB 2337 as one step toward health for all,

Sincerely,

Lynn Knox  
Statewide Health Care Liaison  
Oregon Food Bank