



April 1st, 2021

Dear Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas, and members of the House Health Committee,

We are writing this letter in support of the REAL-D SOGI provisions of HB 3159, the Data Justice Act, to strengthen the collection of REAL-D data and adding SOGI (sexual orientation gender identity) data. Improving the standards and data sets are essential for mapping the intersections of health inequities faced by BIPOC, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, and other historically underrepresented communities in Oregon. This data will serve as a step towards vital health interventions.

Most recently, REAL-D collection requirements were established for all COVID-19 encounters, providers have leaned into ensuring this data would be collected in a trauma-informed way between patient and provider. However, healthcare providers are only required to collect race, ethnicity, language, and disability (REAL-D) data from COVID-19 patients, and are not required by law to collect any sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data.

Contention exists around the civil penalty that may be imposed on a health care provider or health insurer for violation of this data collection, but this enforcement mechanism is essential to holding providers and insurers accountable for collecting race, ethnicity preferred spoken and written languages, and disability status beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and expanding data collection to include sexual orientation and gender identity information as well. LGBTQ+ Oregonians are already paying the price of health inequities, and this is an important step towards obtaining the data needed to inform effective interventions to address those inequities.

Oregon's health systems need this data beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. This data collection will save costs by identifying gaps and disparities early and assist health care providers with vital information they need to serve their patients and the health needs of Oregon communities. The collection of this data will help address the negative impacts of systemic racism and homophobia and other forms of oppression that deeply affect the health of Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Annie Valtierra-Sanchez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Annie Valtierra-Sanchez
Health Equity Director, SO Health-E