

Racial Justice Council- Health Equity Committee

March 31, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
House Health Care Committee
900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 3159 – Oregon Data Justice Act

Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Hayden and Salinas, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Data Justice Act- HB 3159. As co-chairs of the Racial Justice Council (RJC)- Health Equity Committee we share our support for the Data Justice Act. This bill was also included in the Governor's budget to fund the implementation and training costs of the program and it was included on the policy agenda of the RJC.

As leaders in the public sector, business community and non-profit sector we come into this work by centering, Tribal, Black, Indigenous and People of Color. The urgency could not be greater in this moment to channel and follow the voices of people most impacted by historical and institutional racism in Oregon and; create a system with them that fully supports us all.

Over the last year we have come together to support the principle that all Oregonians must have quality, affordable health care, regardless of who they are or where they live. To accomplish this goal, disaggregated data is essential to achieving quality care and closing disparities in access to care. This bill comes to you after nearly 10 years of community advocacy for improved data collection practices in our state.

Improving the standards and data sets can be a vital health intervention. Most recently, REALD 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. We thank providers for moving quickly to ensure this information is collected.

Oregon's REALD standard collects 39 race/ethnicity categories, and asks several questions related to language access and functional ability to better serve individuals and the community. This data can help identify disparities in healthcare, service delivery and systems needs. For example: during COVID-19, REALD data shows that over 100

languages are spoken in communities of Oregon, while OHA makes materials available in the top 12 languages.

Oregon needs this data. Our health system needs this data. It will save costs by identifying gaps and disparities early and assist our providers with vital information they need to serve their patients and health needs of Oregon communities. Collection of this data will help address the negative impact of racism and other forms of bias that deeply affect the health of Oregonians.

On behalf of the Racial Justice Council Health Equity Committee, thank you for your time and your commitment to Oregonians during this challenging time. We look forward to working with you as you develop our state's budget during this legislative session.

Sincerely,

Annie Valtierra- Sanchez, Co-Chair of the Racial Justice Council- Health Equity Committee
Director, Southern Oregon Regional Health Equity Coalition

Jackie Mercer, Co Chair of the Racial Justice Council- Health Equity Committee
CEO, Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA)