

February 28, 2023

Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Angel Harris. I am an advocate and nurse educator. I live in Corvallis. I am writing to request your support for HB 2918 and 2925. Racism causes harm, trauma, illness, and death to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) Oregonians.

With the passage of [House Resolution \(HR\) 6](#) in the 2021 session and HB 4052 in 2022, the Legislature has declared racism a public health crisis and made a commitment to fund and implement the strategies developed by the Oregon Health Equity Task Force, composed of leaders and community-based organizations representing BIPOC, Tribal, and Immigrant and Refugee communities. I have been a volunteer member of the Oregon Health Equity Task Force working on declaring racism a public health crisis, since September of 2020. I have also been volunteering my time attending the implementation meetings of HB 4052.

Thousands of community member volunteer hours have been devoted to developing these bills and their implementation to date. 95 community members have participated in the formal implementation of HB 4052 via the advisory committee OHA was directed to convene and the Health Equity Advisory Leaders and the Indigenous Equity Action Council that the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office (OACO) was directed to convene. Just in these formal convenings by state agencies, community members have put forward 854 hours to implement HB 4052.

Without the passage of the bills before you today, HB 2918 and HB 2925, the vision behind HB 4052 and the Task Force that developed it will not happen.

HB 2918 will provide the funds needed to implement the pilot mobile health unit that received one year of funding, but is intended to be a five-year pilot. These mobile units are intended to be part of the public health approach of preventing illness, disease, injury, and death. They remove barriers enabling increased access and quality of care in BIPOC communities through culturally and linguistically appropriate mobile health units.

HB 2918 will continue the work already well underway by OHA and its advisory council. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) will offer grants to one or more entities to pilot two mobile health units using a culturally and linguistically appropriate model to specifically serve BIPOC communities. Lessons learned from these pilots will be integrated into future plans to assess the feasibility of developing a statewide mobile health unit system, which will be developed by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

HB 2925 honors the time committed already by so many community members. It extends the timeline for the Health Equity Advisory Leaders and the Indigenous Equity Action Council convened by The Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office to meet, discuss, research and make policy recommendations that improve health outcomes of communities of color across the state from June 2023 to June 2026. Additionally, HB 2925 extends the timeline for OHA to develop recommendations on how to fund intervention programs designed to prevent or intervene in the health conditions that result in inequitable and negative outcomes. These slightly longer

timelines will allow for more meaningful investment in community engagement to identify future strategies through these groups.

Racism in Oregon and nationwide has created a situation that is untenable and where immediate action must be taken to mitigate further harm and violence against BIPOC Oregonians and Tribes. As public health professionals, 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. Racial justice requires the formation and purposeful reinforcement of policies, practices, ideologies and behaviors that create equitable power, access, opportunity, treatment, and outcomes for all people regardless of race and redistribute resources to invest where inequities are greatest.

Thank you for the consideration and for your service. I urge you to support HB 2918 and HB 2925.

Sincerely,  
Angel Harris, BSN, RN  
Corvallis