

March 1, 2023

TO: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Healthcare
FROM: Our Children Oregon, The Children's Agenda
RE: Support for HB 2918 and 2925, Racism is a Public Health Crisis

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair Goodwin, Vice-Chair Nelson, and Members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2918 and HB 2925. My name is Cindy Lucht, and I live in Ontario, Oregon.

I'm writing to support HB 2918 and HB 2925: Racism is a Public Health Crisis. HB 2918 and HB 2925 are 2023 Children's Agenda priority concepts. Progress was made when the Oregon Legislature passed HB 4052 in 2022, but without the necessary funds, this bill cannot be fully implemented. We must take action to fully identify investments and strategies to meaningfully address physical and mental health inequities among Oregon's Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and sovereign Tribal Nations.

For children and families of color in our state, health disparities have been long-existent and largely tied to downstream impacts of systemic and institutional racism. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Oregonians are less likely to have access to quality healthcare due to economic, geographical, and linguistic barriers that still exist to this day. When certain segments of our child population are left with fewer opportunities to maintain and improve their health outcomes, Oregon communities as a whole suffer.

Funding key strategies to address racism as a public health crisis will provide the ~269,000 children of color living in Oregon the preventative care they deserve, ensuring an equitable state where every child thrives. We thank you for your time and efforts to improve child well-being across the state. We urge you to support HB 2918 and HB 2925.

Sincerely,
Cindy Lucht