



COALITION OF LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

June 24, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Co-Chair Peter Courtney, Senate President
Co-Chair Tina Kotek, Speaker of the House
Members of the Joint Interim Committee of the First Special Session of 2020

From: Morgan Cowling, MPA, Executive Director

Re: HB 4212 - Support for Race and Ethnicity Data Collection for COVID-19 Testing

The Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO) represents the 33 local public health authorities in Oregon who protect health and prevent the spread of disease. Local public health authorities have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response and continue to work hard to protect communities throughout Oregon. CLHO supports the collection of Race, Ethnicity, Alternate Language and Disability (REAL-D) data when health care providers order lab tests as outlined in the amendment.

Currently, local public health officials receive a notice through the ORPHEUS data system when an Electronic Lab Report (ELR) reports a COVID -19 case. Local public health officials interview each case of COVID-19 to identify close contacts (home, business, personal), symptoms, isolation wrap-around needs, and collects missing race and ethnicity data.

This first connection from local public health to an individual who has tested positive for COVID is essential. If local public health officials had race and ethnicity data from the time of the ELR report they could ensure that bilingual and/or bicultural staff followed-up with that individual. Given the disproportionate impact of COVID on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) timely and culturally appropriate connections are essential to curbing the spread of COVID-19.

In addition, having race and ethnicity data on negative tests would also help both the public health system and the health care system identify communities who are underrepresented in testing data and additional efforts can be made to ensure all Oregonians have equal access to testing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this support.



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