

Dear Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee

I am writing to request your support writing in support of HB 2337. My name is Geraldine Moreno-Black and I am a researcher who has focused on both local and international health issues. I currently live in Eugene.

HB 2337 declares racism a public health crisis in Oregon. Racism causes harm, trauma, illness, and death to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) Oregonians. Most of my experience with racial disparities in local health care come from my involvement with immigrant and asylum seeker communities in Oregon. I have witnessed the difficulties individuals encounter with limited health care resources for translation and sometimes lack of understanding of the impact of racism on individual's lives. Additionally, I know that COVID-19 has been a significant problem in these communities and for BIPOC generally.

Health inequities are preventable issues that when addressed provide significant cost savings not only to health systems, but also other systems related to the social determinants of health. More importantly, addressing these issues of racism improves the health and quality of life for all Oregonians.

HB 2337 acknowledges that Oregon's very founding as a state was rooted in racist ideals, and the damaging impact of these and other racist policies continue to exist within our present-day policies and systems. HB 2337 was developed by the Oregon Health Equity Task Force, which is composed of leaders and community-based organizations representing BIPOC, Tribal, and Immigrant and Refugee communities and includes six initial strategies that are responsive to the specific needs of their communities to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities. Significant among these strategies that focus on increasing health equity through language access, removing barriers to facilitate & increase access and quality care of care in BIPOC communities and increasing community voice in the legislative process

Thank you for the consideration and for your service. I urge you to support HB 2337.

Sincerely,  
Geraldine Moreno-Black  
Nutritional & Biocultural Anthropologist