

Fellow Oregonians members of our house and senate,

We know that COVID-19 has impacted communities of color at higher rates than our white counterparts. We know that communities of color experience barriers to maintain good health but we must recognize that these barriers exist because of racism. Working at Volunteers in Medicine I heard from patients about how they have been mistreated or have had their concerns dismissed by physicians. One case stands out in my memory: A woman in her 40's had persistent abdominal pain and doctors in Oregon told her it was just natural to have cramps during periods and continue to dismiss her pain and concern, she went to Mexico to see a doctor because she was in so much pain and they found out she had a rupture cyst. This is not unique, women of color consistently get their pain and concerns dismissed by the medical community and we can't turn our eyes the other way. It's time for Oregon to acknowledge that Racism is a health crisis even if it doesn't affect you.