



April 19, 2021

Rep. Barbara Smith Warner, Chair
House Committee on Rules
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street, NE - Room 333
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2337 - Racism is a Public Health Crisis

Dear Chair Smith Warner and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on **HB 2337**. We appreciate all the sponsors for having introduced this bill and the underlying legislative policy which recognizes **Racism as a Public Health Crisis**.

Moda Health is a Portland-based health insurer providing dental, medical and pharmacy insurance and administrative services in Oregon, Washington and Alaska. In total, more than 1 million lives are covered by these services. Our company is committed to the communities where our customers and employees live, work, play and raise their families.

In the past year, our country has been deeply impacted by a series of multiple pandemics beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic and then compounded by tremendous and unceasing racial injustice and added on top of that, natural disasters from coast to coast. Unfortunately, as we have learned that the despair brought on by COVID-19 and racial injustice are very much intertwined. The response to the pandemic brought to light inequities and disparities within the health care system for people of color, specifically Black Americans. This shortcoming in access to, or delivery of, health care services does indeed create a public health crisis for people of color, only further broadening the divide in health care between who receives the care needed, when they need it. It is a matter of both education, access and accessibility.

We believe **HB 2337**, perhaps in conjunction with other legislation this session, will help remedy this problem in several ways. This bill represents more than simply a promise to study the problem. It aims through a series of action steps to bring accountability into correcting the problem of inequities and disparities within the health care system. Some of the action steps include:



modahealth.com

PO Box 40384 Portland, Oregon 97240 | 800-852-5195

- Requires state agencies and third-party contractors that collect demographic data on behalf of state agencies to comply with rules adopted by Oregon Health Authority for collection of data on race, ethnicity, preferred spoken and written languages and disability status.
- Requires OHA to fund mobile health units to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate services in every region of state based on recommendations of work groups convened by local health authorities.
- Requires OHA, based on recommendations from task forces convened by Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office, to establish and fund robust culturally and linguistically specific intervention programs designed to prevent or intervene in health conditions that result in inequitable and negative outcomes for individuals who are Black or indigenous and people of color.
- Requires OHA to audit coordinated care organizations, providers of health care to medical assistance recipients and licensed health care facilities to ensure compliance with language access requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Requires Legislative Equity Office to conduct racial health equity impact analysis on all legislation passing in originating chamber and report findings to committees of Legislative Assembly related to health.

Chair Smith Warner and Committee members, thank you again for considering this important piece of legislation and for the opportunity to provide comments. We believe **HB 2337** is a necessary step to begin correcting the very real health care problems many of our citizens, specifically Oregonians of color, have had to endure for far too long.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Karis J.A. Stoudamire-Phillips
Vice President, DEI & Community Initiatives

Jim Francesconi
Vice President of Government and Public Affairs