

February 2, 2022

House Committee on Health Care
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 4005

Dear Chair Prusak, Vice-Chair Hayden, Vice-Chair Salinas, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Molly and I am an MSW living in Portland. I am writing to request your support for HB 4052. Racism causes harm, trauma, illness, and death to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) Oregonians. This is a reality that folks live with every day. As a community, we must counteract these forces through not only acknowledging these problems but proactively creating practical solutions to eliminate racism and its negative impact in our state and on our communities.

In my experience working with communities, rarely was leadership or staff diverse enough to offer culturally responsive care. Addressing inequity in our health care system is a first step, and providing culturally responsive care should be the baseline that everyone can expect in Oregon.

The solutions to these problems must come from the communities facing the highest risk, from those who know the harm of racism. This bill would create much much needed space to center the recommendations of Black, Indigenous, Tribal, Immigrant, Refugee communities and other communities of color in this process.

With the passage of House Resolution (HR) 6 in the 2021 session, the Legislature has declared racism a public health crisis, but we need to go beyond a declaration and identify and fund specific strategies to begin addressing the crisis. In the 2021 session, the Oregon Health Equity Task Force, composed of leaders and community-based organizations representing BIPOC, Tribal, and Immigrant and Refugee communities, worked with Rep. Salinas and many supporters to attempt to get HB 2337 passed, but in the final days of the session it wasn't possible to move forward funding allocations. However, the House did pass HR 6 declaring racism a public health crisis.

The Oregon Health Equity Task Force worked with Rep. Salinas to come back in the 2022 session to identify and fund two initial strategies through HB 4052 that begin to address both immediate needs of their communities to reduce racial and ethnic health inequities, as well as creating a pathway for future strategies to address structural racism in the future.

1. Remove barriers to increase access and quality of care in BIPOC communities through culturally and linguistically appropriate mobile health units.
 - a. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) will offer grants to one or more entities to pilot two mobile health units using a culturally and linguistically appropriate model

to specifically serve BIPOC communities. Lessons learned from these pilots will be integrated into future plans to assess the feasibility of developing a statewide mobile health unit system, which will be developed by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

- b. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) will explore the feasibility of expansion of a statewide mobile health system through several assessments.
 - c. An advisory committee will be convened and staffed by OHA to help guide these plans and ensure a focus on addressing structural racism.
2. Meaningfully invest in community engagement to identify future strategies through the support of statewide affinity groups: This would include funding to support the Oregon Advocacy Commissions (OACs) in convening BIPOC leaders to recommend future strategies to continue working to address structural racism through policy and systems change, long-term.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service.

Sincerely,
Molly S