



To: Ways & Means Subcommittee
From: Oregon Health Equity Alliance
Date: April 2, 2015
Re: OHA budget & REAL +D

Chairs Bates and Nathanson, Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA) would like to express our support for funding Race Ethnicity and Language plus Disability program (REAL +D). OHEA represents a collective effort of 38 member organizations who work together to make Oregon a more equitable place for all. Our coalition believes every Oregonian should have an equal chance to achieve their full health potential, and that is why we are supporting REAL +D funding.

Improved data collection & analysis is one of OHEA's top policy priorities adopted in 2011. Our efforts, in large part led by APANO and CIO, resulted in the passage of HB 2134 (2013) with strong bipartisan support. We are in strong support of the rules adopted by the state in 2014 to define and operationalize standards for race, ethnicity, language and disability status data collection in Oregon. These standards clarify definitions and data collection practices, addressing longstanding inconsistencies and gaps.

When fully implemented, the HB 2134 standards established in 2013 will provide health policymakers and program designers more accurate data about community needs, in order to improve service delivery, lower costs and improve health outcomes. We support the REAL+D OHA-DHS policy option package and funding request because it will improve and streamline data collection systems necessary for the full implementation of HB 2134 standards.

The current status quo is costly to our our state, to our health and our pocketbook. The improvements funded by this proposal will provide more accurate data to state, tribal and local governments, as well as Coordinated Care Organizations and community based organizations. We have already seen such data inform shifts in programs to better serve communities experiencing health disparities in local counties such as Marion and Multnomah with increasingly diverse populations.

OHEA urges your full support of funding REAL+D. Thank you for your commitment to our communities.

Joseph Santos-Lyons, APANO, OHEA co-Chair
Midge Purcell, Urban League of Portland, OHEA co-Chair