

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

For Use by Health Care Provider Organizations, State Agencies, and Others When Collecting Race, Ethnicity, and Language Data From Patients and Clients

The following list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is a resource for provider organizations and state agencies to share with patients and clients about the collection of race, ethnicity, and language data as part of an intake or patient registration process. The FAQs are intended as a stand-alone communication tool for patients and clients by provider organizations that have implemented REL data collection processes as a common practice within the EHR patient registration workflows.

Q: Why is it important for provider organizations and agencies to collect granular race, ethnicity, and language data?

A: Collecting granular data on race, ethnicity, and language data is essential for several reasons. Individual data can inform strategies and interventions to support better care and services. Aggregated data on population groups can support the identification of health care disparities and inequities. For example, race and ethnicity data could help policymakers determine where community investments would have the greatest impact on racial health disparities. Collection of this data helps health care organizations meet the needs of diverse patient populations.

Q: What is the difference between granular and non-granular race, ethnicity, and language data collection?

A: Granular data collection involves gathering more detailed and specific information about an individual's race, ethnicity, and language, using standardized categories that allow for more precise reporting and analysis. Non-granular collection may use broad categories that provide less detailed information.

Q: Are patients or clients required to provide race, ethnicity, and language information?

A: Providing race, ethnicity, and language data is completely voluntary. Patients and clients have the right to decline to answer these questions if they wish.

Q: How will my race, ethnicity, and language data be used?

A: Collected data is primarily used for statistical analysis and reporting to identify health care disparities, improve patient care, and ensure compliance with health care equity regulations. It is also used to tailor health care services to the unique needs of different populations.

Q: How will my privacy and confidentiality be protected?

A: Provider organizations and agencies are committed to safeguarding your data privacy. A federal

privacy law known as HIPAA ensures that your race, ethnicity, and language data can only be for health care-related purposes.

Q: Can I update my race, ethnicity, and language information if it changes?

A: Yes, you can update your race, ethnicity, and language information at any time.

Q: What if I don't know my race or ethnicity information?

A: If you are unsure about your race or ethnicity, you can leave those fields blank or ask a health care provider for assistance. You are not required to provide this information if you do not know it or do not wish to share it.

Q: Will providing this information affect my care or eligibility for services?

A: Providing race, ethnicity, and language data does not impact your eligibility for services or affect your care negatively. The collection of race, ethnicity, and language data is done solely to improve the quality of health care services by addressing health disparities.

Q: How can I be sure that my data will be used responsibly and ethically?

A: Health care organizations and agencies are bound by strict ethical and legal guidelines regarding the use of your data. They are committed to using your data in a responsible manner to understand and address health disparities and improve health care services.

Q: Who should I contact if I have questions or concerns about the data collection process?

A: If you have questions or concerns about the data collection process, your health care provider's privacy officer or clinic administration staff should be able to help answer your questions.