

WHY SHOULD HOSPITALS COLLECT PATIENT RACE, ETHNICITY, AND LANGUAGE?

Target Audience: Admissions/Registrations Clerks and Front-Line Personnel

Purpose: This document outlines the purposes of collecting patient race, ethnicity, and language and highlights the important role that front-line registration staff have in collecting complete, high quality information from patients.

WHY SHOULD HOSPITALS COLLECT PATIENT RACE, ETHNICITY, AND LANGUAGE?

As a front-line hospital admissions/registration staff, you are vital to the patient experience and in helping the hospital better serve patients and the community. One of the key responsibilities you have is to accurately collect each patient's personal information, including the patient's race, ethnicity, and language abilities and preferences. Collecting this information is part of the process by which our hospital staff can identify and address unique patient needs. Patients are more likely to share personal information when asked by respectful, knowledgeable staff, and our hospital is better able to serve its patients when this information is collected for everyone in a consistent manner.

Information that you help collect during the registration process on race, ethnicity, and language become a part of the patient's medical record. This information helps the care team communicate effectively with patients, as well as understand a patient's culture, which may affect their health. By knowing more about the patients that we serve, our hospital will be better able to deliver services, such as providing materials in the languages best understood by our patients.

California is the most populous and diverse state in the U.S. More than half of Californians belong to a racial and/or ethnic minority group and nearly 1 in 5 are limited English proficient, meaning that they speak English less than "very well". Because race, ethnicity, and language affect patients' health and healthcare, it is critical to collect this information, and you, our front line staff, play a key role in this process.