



# Oregon Medical Board

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan



# A Message from Executive Director Nicole Krishnaswami

The Oregon Medical Board serves all Oregon citizens, and respects and is inclusive of the diversity among those citizens. To conduct its mission, the OMB embraces initiatives and policies consistent with respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in medical regulation and patient care.

Systemic racism, discrimination, and structural inequities cause many Oregonians to experience alarming levels of disparity in access to health care resources and in achieving quality health outcomes. The OMB embraces its responsibility to ensure health equity for all genders, ages, races, national origins, colors, ethnicities, religions, physiological and psychological disabilities, sexual orientations, and those with veteran status in Oregon. Individuals in all these categories should expect that the practice of medicine will be regulated to protect their health, safety, and wellbeing. They should further expect that they will have the ability to have their voices heard in pursuit of these goals.

Many studies find significant inequitable outcomes among groups according to differences in race and ethnicity. In April 2021, Rochelle P. Walensky, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, declared that racism is a serious public health threat that directly affects the wellbeing of millions of Americans<sup>1</sup>. The Oregon Medical Board is committed to supporting equitable patient care by identifying and working to address discriminatory practices which have no place in medical regulation.

Only by embracing the variety of cultures embodied by Oregon's citizens can the OMB provide the best possible service to the public, applicants, and licensees. The OMB continues to strive to improve the lives of those living within the borders of this state and will continue to improve as the agency moves forward. The OMB's commitment to Oregonians comes from its Board, management team, and includes all staff.

The Oregon Medical Board DEI Action Plan was created through guidance from the [Federation of State Medical Boards 2022 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Medical Regulation and Patient Care Interim Report](#)<sup>2</sup> and the [2021 State of Oregon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan](#)<sup>3</sup>. This plan stands for my personal and professional dedication to upholding our commitment to the citizens of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Nicole Krishnaswami, JD

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## Introduction

Oregonians are growing increasingly diverse, and inequities in access to quality health care are apparent. For the Board to promote and work towards equity in medical regulation and patient care, the Oregon Medical Board (OMB or the Board) must acknowledge inequities are not acceptable, gain a better understanding of what contributes to inequity, and commit to addressing inequities.

As Oregon changes demographically, the Board must formulate innovative approaches to ensure all residents can live and thrive in our state, across their identities. That is why the OMB DEI Action Plan:

- Acknowledges the history and current realities of inequities and how a DEI action plan can be applied to address disparities that exist in medical regulation and patient care.
- Addresses the most persistent disparities while shifting to a more permanent framework to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of Oregonians.
- Recognizes intersectionality, through acknowledgment of the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, gender, sexuality, and class as they apply to a given individual or group, which creates systems of discrimination or disadvantage.
- Emphasizes that targeted strategies are necessary to eliminate racial disparities, including individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism, as well as other identity-based disparities, such as marginalization by gender, sexuality, age, disability status, immigration status, and other identities, in medical regulation and patient care.
- Focuses on the institutional level to address all areas of marginalization, while creating an all-inclusive institutional approach to health equity.
- Operationalizes the OMB's racial equity and DEI work.

The Oregon Medical Board's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan defines our historically and currently underserved and under-resourced communities, including Oregonians who identify as:

- Native American, Oregon's Nine Federally Recognized Tribes, American Indian, Alaskan Natives
- Black, African, African American
- Latina, Latino, Latinx, Hispanic
- Asian
- Pacific Islander (including Compact of Free Association Citizens)
- Immigrants, Refugees, Asylum-Seekers, Deferred Status Holders, Temporary Protected Status
- Undocumented, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), "Dreamers," Non-Immigrant Visa Holders
- Linguistically Diverse, English Language Learners (ELL)
- Economically Disadvantaged
- People with Disabilities
- LGBTQIA2S+
- Farmworkers, Migrant Seasonal
- Workers

## Definitions

**Racial Equity** means closing the gaps so that race can no longer predict any person's success, which simultaneously improves outcomes for all.

To achieve racial equity, we must transform our institutions and structures to create systems that provide the infrastructure for communities to thrive equally. This commitment requires a change in basic assumptions on our path to recovery through the intentional integration of racial equity in every decision.

**Equity** acknowledges that not all people, or all communities, are starting from the same place due to historic and current systems of oppression.

Equity is the effort to provide various levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs to achieve fairness in outcomes. Equity actionably empowers communities most impacted by systemic oppression and requires the redistribution of resources, power, and opportunity to those communities.

**Diversity** means honoring and including people of diverse backgrounds, identities, and experiences collectively and as individuals.

It emphasizes the need for sharing power and increasing representation of communities that are systemically underrepresented and under-resourced. These differences are strengths that maximize the state's competitive advantage through innovation, effectiveness, and adaptability.

**Inclusion** is a state of belonging when persons of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers, collaborators, and colleagues.

Inclusion is the environment that organizations create to allow these differences to thrive.



## OMB Mission

The mission of the Oregon Medical Board is to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of Oregon citizens by regulating the practice of medicine in a manner that promotes access to quality care.

## Racial Equity Vision

Within this context of historical harms, changing demographics, intersectional identities, and more; our vision for the next five years and beyond is to:

- **Eradicate** institutional and structural racism within the Board and its licensees, and by doing so, have resounding impacts on health care equity for all Oregonians.
- **Ensure** an equitable regulatory system where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, and everyone's voice is heard.
- **Provide** an inclusive and welcoming agency by celebrating our collective diversity of race, ethnicity, culture, color, disability, gender, gender identity, marital status, national origin, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, and immigration status.

## OMB Values

The Oregon Medical Board's values further the mission and shape the culture of the agency.

- **Integrity:** a commitment to acting honestly, ethically, and fairly.
- **Accountability:** a willingness to accept responsibility for actions in a transparent manner.
- **Excellence:** an expectation of the highest quality work and innovation.
- **Customer Service:** a dedication to provide equitable, caring service to all Oregonians with professionalism and respect.
- **Equity:** a devotion to creating and fostering an environment where everyone has access and opportunity to thrive.

## Racial Equity Goals

The State of Oregon and the Oregon Medical Board share the following goals:





## DEI Action Plan Objectives and Approach

As long as structural and systemic inequities exist in society, they threaten medical regulation and patient care. Acknowledging and understanding inequities in access to quality health care in Oregon and working to achieve health equity through diversity and meaningful inclusion are fundamental to caring for the public we serve. The Oregon Medical Board has committed to prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in its work.

### Objectives

The objectives of the Board's DEI Action Plan, which promotes health equity, are guided by the [Government Alliance on Race & Equity \(GARE\) Racial Equity Action Plans Manual](#)<sup>4</sup> and are as follows:

- **Normalize** the concepts of racial justice – acknowledge history, prioritize, and make urgent efforts to put racial equity at the forefront.
- **Organize** efforts and build organizational capacity across internal and external partnerships for connected, cohesive, and amplified impacts.
- **Operationalize** and embed equity into every part of the OMB, putting DEI strategies into practice.
- **Guide** and direct operationalizing of racial equity and DEI work.
- **Inspire** expansion of equity by sharing and collaborating to build on what is already happening.

### Approach

The Oregon Medical Board will work in ways, to promote health equity, that regularly include the process steps recommended by the National Equity Project's [Leading for Equity Framework](#)<sup>5</sup>:

- **See:** Identify systemic and institutional barriers that hinder progress toward a more diverse and inclusive workforce.
- **Engage:** Work within the agency, across the enterprise when applicable, and with communities to create meaningful, intentional, and inclusive processes for change to result.
- **Act:** Develop and implement solutions to address barriers and improve service delivery to all Oregonians.

# DEI Action Plan Strategies

## Strategy 1: Inclusion and Anti-Racism

In a healthy and safe Oregon, all people and their diverse backgrounds are celebrated. The Board can ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing all Oregonians by taking active measures against harassment, discrimination, racism, xenophobia, stigmatization, violence, and hate crimes. The OMB must be recognized as an institutional power to protect and serve those who have endured discrimination, racism, and hatred, often resulting in health disparities.

### Actions:

- Adopt a Statement of Philosophy clearly defining explaining the board’s position on diversity, equity, and inclusion, outlining the value of health equity for patients, the Board’s commitment to equitable processes for licensees, and the Board’s position against discrimination of any sort as a professional expectation.
  - Timeline: January 2024
- Create a policy and/or procedure for complainants to feel safe to file complaints regarding racism, hate, harassment, and discrimination complaints, establishing a process for reviewing discrimination using a trauma-informed lens.
  - Timeline: January 2024
- Add a new definition for unprofessional conduct that includes “discrimination in the practice of medicine/acupuncture,” which would make it grounds for discipline under 677.190(1)(a) and 677.190(17).
  - Timeline: April 2024
- Add “discrimination” category of complaint to better track and be able to analyze data involving discrimination in the practice of medicine and acupuncture.
  - Timeline: December 2024 (to align with the implementation of the new business system)
- Review Oregon Administrative Rules, policies, and procedures for potential bias in gender, race, ethnicity, etc.
  - Timeline: December 2024



## Strategy 2: Community Engagement

Community engagement means sharing power by proactively collaborating with the community and building meaningful partnerships to inform decision-making. Engaging impacted communities ensures that OMB plans are relevant, effective, and build on the existing solutions, ideas, and strengths that Oregon’s diverse communities have to offer. Fundamental to the role of the Board is the maintenance and strengthening of public trust in the practice of medicine and in professional self-regulation.

### Actions:

- Participate in statewide efforts to diversify the health care workforce (e.g., those spearheaded by OHA).
  - Timeline: July 2023
- Conduct a landscape review to identify partners at the local, state, and national levels that have a nexus to DEI and can support the board’s DEI efforts.
  - Timeline: December 2023
- Encourage diverse members of the public and licensees to apply for Board membership by partnering with state and local organizations representing communities that have been marginalized to identify potential appointees.
  - Timeline: Fall 2023 for 2024 Vacancies
- Build on and collaborate with the trusted network of community-based organizational partners to aid in policymaking and ensure that we proactively address policy gaps.
  - Timeline: December 2024



### Strategy 3: Inclusive Communications and Services

Collaborative and coordinated communication efforts are needed to reach people who have not been provided information sufficiently in the past. Services must be delivered equitably so that all Oregonians can access and benefit from the OMB's work.

#### Actions:

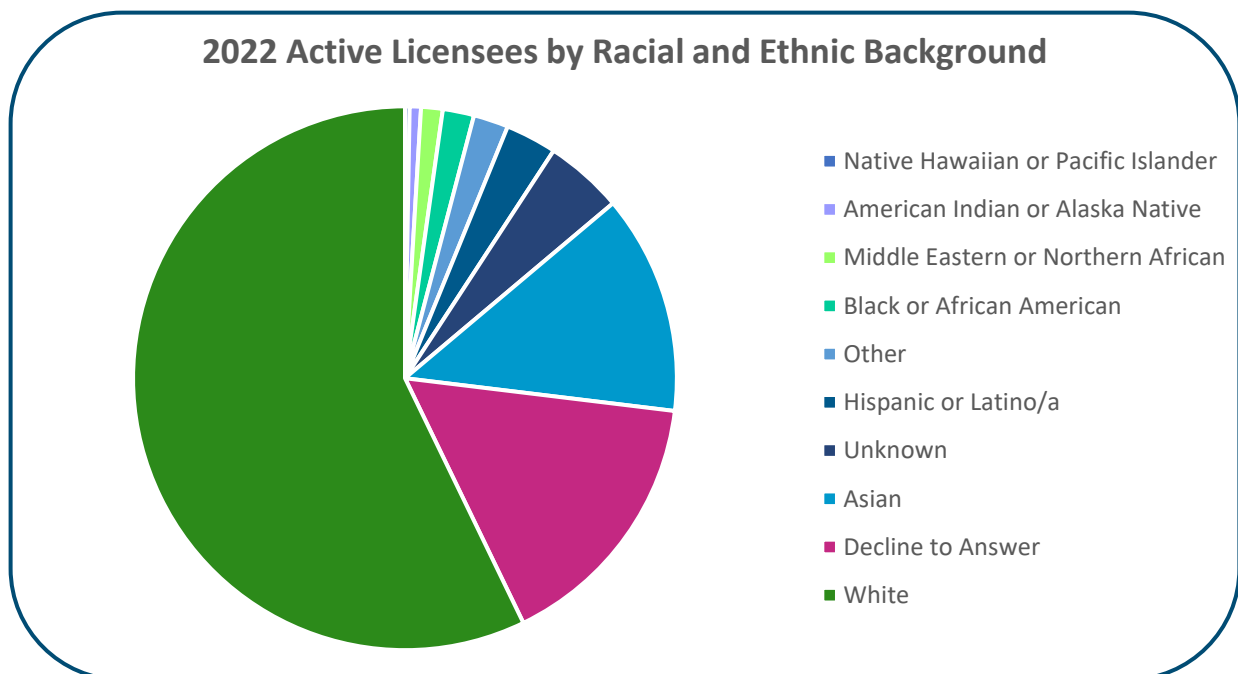
- Regularly update the OMB website with DEI information and resources, i.e., education on health inequities, mitigating bias or other opportunities to promote equity, peer reviewed data about DEI in the field of medicine and acupuncture, etc.
  - Timeline: August 2023
- Publish articles in the quarterly *OMB Report*, featuring authors of diverse racial and ethnic communities and with a focus on DEI in medical regulation, education, or patient care.
  - Timeline: August 2023
- Post public session meeting materials on website to increase transparency to the public and licensees.
  - Timeline: October 2023
- Offer multiple pathways for filing complaints to make the complaints process more accessible to the public, considering whether language barriers exist whether disability status presents a barrier to the complaints process.
  - Timeline: December 2023
- Audit the accuracy and consistency of the civil penalty process.
  - Timeline: December 2023
- Review forms and written materials, identify high-use documents, and translate them into additional languages.
  - Timeline: January 2024
- Recognize trauma due to marginalization, inequity, violence, PTSD, and other structural factors and remove language and messages that worsen these inequities.
  - Timeline: January 2024
- Review licensing criteria to ensure consistency and standardization to avoid candidate bias, applying an equity lens in all application reviews.
  - Timeline: July 2024
- Provide information and education to patients about what constitutes discriminatory or otherwise inequitable care, and how the OMB is working to address it.
  - Timeline: December 2024
- Create video and audio recordings to increase accessibility.
  - Timeline: July 2025

## Strategy 4: Data

The role of data is to help identify disparities and opportunities for improvement.

### Actions:

- Prepare annual reports to transparently show the work of the Board through data.
  - Timeline: January 2024
- Apply policy to data use so data collection and interpretation are done in trustworthy, effective, and inclusive ways.
  - Timeline: January 2024
- Analyze data, with a DEI lens, to influence policy change and improve service delivery.
  - Timeline: July 2024
- Allocate resources based on where data shows they are most needed and effective.
  - Timeline: July 2024 for 2025/2027 Budget
- Evaluate equity in administrative case reviews and final outcomes.
  - Timeline: December 2024
- Collect diversity data from complainants after resolution of an investigative case.
  - Timeline: January 2025
- Evaluate equity in investigative case reviews and final outcomes.
  - Timeline: December 2025



*Note: Licensees may select more than one option.*

## Strategy 5: Budget and Contract Equity

The Board's work around equity entails the provision of economic opportunities for all Oregon businesses. The OMB must use the budget process to ensure the impact of our services and investments reach all Oregonians. It is important to acknowledge and address the roots of inequity that currently exist whenever making revenue, procurement, and contract decisions. The Board will apply equitable contracting and purchasing practices to promote recovery and community economic development for minority-owned, women-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned, and emerging small businesses.

### Actions:

- Provide easily accessible information to current and forecasted contract opportunities.
  - Timeline: July 2023
- Embed equity lens in the entirety of a project life cycle: from concept, planning, project development, procurement, administering, to close out of the project.
  - Timeline: January 2024
- Conduct regular equity assessments of budget decisions.
  - Timeline: June 2024 for 2025/2027 Budget
- Create and incorporate equity impact statements for agency budget processes.
  - Timeline: July 2024 for 2025/2027 Budget
- Increase initiative-taking outreach to minority-owned, women-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned, and emerging small business to build better business relationships and engagement.
  - Timeline: January 2025



## Strategy 6: Diversifying the OMB Workforce and Creating an Inclusive Workplace

The OMB promotes public service through intentional and purposeful recruitment, hiring, and retention of culturally and ethnically diverse staff, Board members, and committee members while ensuring a safe, inclusive, accessible, and belonging working environment for all.

### Actions:

- Promote equal employment opportunities and pay equity in the workplace.
  - Timeline: July 2023
- Ensure Board and committees represent communities of color, Tribal communities, and communities representing people with disabilities when recruiting for new Board members; the Board should be comprised of individuals who reflect the demography of the state's population.
  - Timeline: Fall 2023 for 2024 Vacancies
- Track and monitor hiring processes, including recruitment, interview procedures, and hiring outcomes.
  - Timeline: December 2023
- Provide trainings and professional development opportunities to diversify future leadership and for agency succession planning.
  - Timeline: December 2023
- Review and update recruitment, hiring, retention, and succession planning processes and policies.
  - Timeline: January 2024
- Provide DEI trainings topics such as anti-discrimination, health disparities and inequities, trauma-informed processes, and bias recognition, ensuring Board members and staff have understandings of how health inequities relate to the patient safety mission of the Board.
  - Timeline: June 2024
- Review and update position descriptions to include state equity vision, values, and goals and use gender neutral language.
  - Timeline: December 2024

## References

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- <sup>1</sup> Media Statement from CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, on Racism and Health, April 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0408-racism-health.html>
- <sup>2</sup> Federation of State Medical Board, April 2022, *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Medical Regulation and Patient Care Interim Report*, Interim Report of the FSMB Workgroup on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Medical Regulation and Patient Care. <https://www.fsmb.org/siteassets/advocacy/policies/dei-interim-report-april-2022-final.pdf>
- <sup>3</sup> State of Oregon, August 2021, *State of Oregon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan: A Roadmap to Racial Equity and Belonging*. [https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/Commission/Documents/2021-09\\_Item-2\\_Directors-Report\\_Attachment-A\\_DEI-Action-Plan.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/Commission/Documents/2021-09_Item-2_Directors-Report_Attachment-A_DEI-Action-Plan.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), November 2016, *Racial Equity Action Plans: A how-to Manual*. <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GARE-Racial-Equity-Action-Plans.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> National Equity Project, Leading for Equity Framework. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e32157bff63c7446f3f1529/t/5f6e66a6d1d25776dce676c4/1601070759743/NEP-LFE+Framework-1pg.pdf>