

## FAQ: Common Questions from Staff & Patients When Collecting Race/Ethnicity Data

We thank you for supporting the collection of race/ethnicity data in healthcare. This data allows us to better help vulnerable and underserved populations, provide high-quality and compassionate care, and eliminate health disparities. Remember to always give your staff and patients the opportunity to ask questions around this collection process; answering these questions may help ease fears and increase cooperations. Patients are also more likely to respond with this information when they understand the reasoning behind this important effort.

### Common Questions From Our Patients:

- **Q: Why Do You Need this Information?**

**A:** This information helps us to provide you, your family and your community with equitable care.

- **Q: Will This Information Be Shared With Government Agencies or Used for Other Purposes?**

**A:** We only use patient information for healthcare purposes and share it with the Department of Health as required. When we share the data, it is de-identified so your name and other sensitive information is not included. The only other people who may see your information are members of your care team and those authorized to review your medical record.

- **Q: I Am Multi-Racial, May I Choose More Than One Race?**

**A:** You may select up to 2 races.

- **Q: I Do Not Want to Answer These Questions. Do I Have to?**

**A:** Participation is optional, although we feel that your responses to these questions will help us improve the quality of care provided to you.

- **Q: I am White, Why Are You Not Asking Me About My Ethnicity?**

**A:** We recognize many race and ethnic groups may experience some level of health disparities. We are focusing on particular race and ethnic populations for whom we have less information so that we may review methods to improve and enhance health outcomes.

### Common Questions From Our Staff:

- **Q: What if a Patient Refuses to Provide their Race and Ethnicity?**

**A:** Kindly ask the patient why they are reluctant to provide the information. Allow and welcome the opportunity for questions, as they may have a concern that you are able to address. Our goal is to provide a safe space where every patient can respond openly and accurately. Remember that responses are optional; the patient does not have to provide information if they are adamant about not responding, and we will respect that decision.

- **Q: What if I Feel Uncomfortable Asking Patients About Their Race and Ethnicity?**

**A:** Patient care teams ask our patients a number of personal questions to better provide care. Race/ethnicity information is equally as important to meet our care promise. The more comfortable you feel speaking to our patients about this topic, the more comfortable the patient will feel responding. Practice asking these types of questions with your colleagues and care teams until it becomes second-nature to you. You can always reach out to us for support.

- **Q: What if the Patient Wants to Choose Hispanic/Latino as Their Race?**

**A:** Under New York State and Federal guidelines, Hispanic/Latino is categorized as an ethnicity. We understand that some patients consider Latino their race. Patients are welcome to choose any race, or they may choose "other" or "unknown." We want them to feel comfortable with their responses.

- **Q: May I Provide Responses for My Patients?**

- **A:** Many of us feel we are able to determine someone's race and ethnicity based on their appearance. We may think it is easier to choose the patient's race and ethnicity rather than ask the person to provide the information. We often are incorrect about our assumptions of a person's background. Incorrect assumptions may lead to an uncomfortable interaction. Our goal is to make patients feel comfortable