Are there specific categories that should be used to collect race and ethnicity information and which programs must comply with this requirement?

Any examples are for illustrative purposes only.

The requirement to collect race and ethnicity has historically applied to hospitals (Standard RC.02.01.01, EP 25). As of January 1, 2023, it will also apply to organizations in the ambulatory health care (RC.02.01.01, EP 31), behavioral health and human services (RC.02.01.01, EP 26) and critical access hospital (RC.02.01.01, EP 25) programs.

The intent of the requirement is to collect race and ethnicity information to identify potential health care disparities, and organizations have the flexibility to determine which categories of race and ethnicity are appropriate for the population they serve. The Joint Commission does not specify which categories an organization should use to collect race and ethnicity data.

While The Joint Commission requirement is not prescriptive of which categories of race and ethnicity should be collected, many state reporting entities and payers do specify these requirements. Organizations are encouraged to use, at a minimum, the race and ethnicity categories from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and US Census Bureau, and to consider collecting ethnicity categories based on the population to obtain additional granularity. Resources such as the Institute of Medicine report Race, Ethnicity, and Language Data: Standardization for Health Care Quality Improvement and the Health Research and Educational Trust Disparities Toolkit provide additional guidance on collecting race and ethnicity information.

Resources

Hasnain-Wynia, R., Pierce, D., Haque, A., Hedges Greising, C., Prince, V., & Reiter, J. (2007). Health research and educational trust disparities toolkit. American Hospital Association

Manchanda, R., Brown, M., & Cummings, D. (2022). Racial and health equity concrete STEPS for health systems. Translate your commitment to racial and health equity into action in your health system. American Medical Association STEPS forward

Ulmer C., McFadden B., Nerenz D.: Race, Ethnicity, and Language Data: Standardization for Health Care Quality Improvement. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2009. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (2021). Building an organizational response to health disparities

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