

Data on Race and Ethnicity

Why am I being asked for this information?

Collecting data on race and ethnicity is a part of “Meaningful Use.” The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 requires that physicians use a certified electronic health record (EHR) in a ‘meaningful way,’ such as e-prescribing medications.

One Meaningful Use requirement is that physicians collect and report on the following demographic data: preferred language, gender, race, ethnicity, and date of birth.

Why is this data important?

According to the federal government, data on race and ethnicity is used to monitor equal access in housing, education, employment, and other areas, for populations that historically had experienced discrimination and differential treatment because of their race or ethnicity. These questions are included in the census, in household surveys, on administrative forms (e.g., school registration and mortgage lending applications), and in medical and other research.

Do I have a right to decline this information?

Yes; you may decline to provide all or part of the demographic information you are being asked.

Race Categories:

- American Indian or Alaska Native: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- Asian: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- Black or African American: A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. Terms such as “Haitian” can be used in addition to “Black or African American.”
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- White: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Ethnicity Categories:

- Hispanic or Latino: A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term, "Spanish origin," can be used in addition to "Hispanic or Latino."
- Not Hispanic or Latino

Sources:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/information_and_regulatory_affairs/re_guidance2000update.pdf
http://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/30_Meaningful_Use.asp
http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_1997standards/