



# COLLECTING NEW PATIENT DATA

**Next time you go to the hospital, you may see or be asked new questions about race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, and disability.**

Hospitals share information about patient stays with the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). Washington law now requires hospital health care providers to ask patients about race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, and disability information.

DOH worked with Washington communities when developing the new categories. This information helps the state understand who uses hospital services and for what reasons. When DOH understands how communities use the hospital, we can serve the communities in a more meaningful way.

## WHY WE ASK

Your answers to these questions help public health. Public health officials want to know who is most affected by inequalities in health care access, health care quality, and health outcomes. When we know how communities use the hospital, we can plan how to best help communities. Health care inequalities are complex. The more we understand the better we can be.

## YOU GET TO DECIDE

It's up to you whether you answer these questions. While the hospital must ask you all the questions, you aren't required to answer them. For questions you don't want to answer, you can choose "Patient declined to respond." DOH hopes you'll answer these questions, so we can better serve you and all Washingtonians.

## HOW DO YOU PROTECT MY PRIVACY?

We want everyone to feel safe answering the questions. Your information is strictly confidential and will be treated as a confidential public health record. DOH does not include personal information, like name or date of birth, when reporting information.

Sharing your information with us will not impact any benefits you receive from the state, like SNAP or Apple Health. This information will not be shared with immigration officials.