

Learning More About Who Our Patients Are Helps Valley Provide Better Care

Frequently Asked Questions about REaL & SOGI Data

Starting in 2023, regulatory agencies that govern hospital accreditation are requiring that hospitals collect expanded Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) information; Race, Ethnicity and Language (REaL) information; and disability status information from their patients. We will begin asking for this information in our clinics later in 2023. Collecting this information allows us to better understand the needs of our diverse community members, allowing us to better care for our community like family.

Q: WHY ARE WE ASKING ABOUT RACE, ETHNICITY AND LANGUAGE? Research shows that racially diverse communities experience higher rates of certain health issues and experience more barriers to getting care. Understanding a patient's background, culture, language, helps us deliver appropriate, culturally sensitive care to all our patients.

Q: WHY IS THE TERM "WHITE" BEING USED AS OPPOSED TO "CAUCASIAN?" The term "White" aligns with U.S. Census data and is the inclusive term healthcare is using.

Q: WHY ARE WE ASKING ABOUT SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY? Every patient has unique health needs. Research shows that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ+) people have health needs that differ from the rest of the population. This community also experiences higher rates of certain health issues compared to others. Learning about sexual orientation and gender identity will help us deliver appropriate health services and culturally sensitive care to LGBTQ+ patients, as well as all of our patients.

Q: WHY ARE THERE ADDITIONS FOR SOGI AND REAL DATA? Our patients have unique identities, and the more options patients have to choose from, the more we can understand their individual health needs. We hope all patients feel represented in the new categories. See the SOGI Glossary for more information about the updated SOGI terms.

Q: WHO WILL SEE THIS INFORMATION? Caregivers at Valley will have access to this information; it is a part of the patient's medical record. This information is confidential and protected by law, just like all other health information. In addition, this data will be reported to the Department of Health Comprehensive Hospital Abstract Reporting System, CHARS, which will be used to identify and analyze statewide hospitalization trends, healthcare access trends, and quality trends. The data collected by CHARS will not be used in a way to identify individuals or to contact individuals.

Q: WHAT IF PATIENTS DON'T WANT TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION? Patients can choose whether to share the information. Patients have the option to check the box "Choose not to disclose."

Q: HOW WILL THIS INFORMATION BE USED? Valley caregivers will use this patient information to help meet healthcare needs. In addition, gathering this information from all patients allows our hospital to see if there are gaps in care or services across different populations. Learning this tells us if we need to improve the care we give to our patients.