

Addressing Concerns from Patients

- General rule of thumb: If a person does not want to answer these questions, move on. Do not force the issue. Simply record “Declined.”
- In some instances, people may have questions or may be confused. The following slides provide a sample of questions and responses. These are not meant to be exhaustive.
- You are the experts—modify as needed.

Handling the Responses from Patients: Basic Guidelines

- Use common sense.
- Decide whether you will provide a list of categories (either Census or OMB) or whether you will let patients self-report based on their own descriptions.
- Allow patients to respond and use as much of their own description as possible.
- Respect their descriptions (or choices if providing categories).
- Avoid words that might be considered confrontational.

Handling the Responses from Patients: Matrix

- We realize that patients might be concerned and might feel uncomfortable.
- They will have questions and comments.
- We want you to feel comfortable answering any questions patients ask.
- The *Patient Response Matrix* is based on actual patient answers to the race/ethnicity questions.
- The matrix is intended to be used as a tool to help you respond in the best possible manner.
- Again, the best course of action is to use common sense and a nonconfrontational approach, and to take care not to push the issue if it is clear that the patient does not want to respond to the question.

Patient Response Matrix - Routine

Patient Response	Suggested Response	Hints	Code
"I'm American."	Would you like to use an additional term, or would you like me to just put American?		American or others if specified
"Can't you tell by looking at me?"	Well, usually I can. But sometimes I'm wrong, so we think it is better to let people tell us. I don't want to put in the wrong answer. I'm trained not to make any assumptions.		
"I was born in Nigeria, but I've really lived here all my life. What should I say?"	That is really up to you. You can use any term you like. It is fine to say that you are Nigerian.	<i>It's best not to ask for this information again.</i>	

Patients Returning

Patient Response	Suggested Response	Hints	Code
A patient returning for care with the DECLINED code.	DO NOT ASK AGAIN.		
A patient returning for care with the 'UNKNOWN' or "Unable to provide information" code.	<i>Proceed to ask for the information per routine.</i>		

Tougher Questions

These generally indicate DECLINED code

Patient Response	Suggested Response	Hints	Code
"I'm human."	Is that your way of saying that you don't want to answer the question? If so, I can just say that you didn't want to answer.	DON'T SAY - I'll just code as a declined	Declined
"It's none of your business."	I'll just put down that you didn't want to answer which is fine.	DON'T SAY -I'll just code as a declined.	Declined
"Why do you care? We're all human beings."	Well, many studies from around the country have shown that a patient's race and ethnicity can influence the treatment they receive. We want to make sure this doesn't happen here, so we use this information to check and make sure that everyone gets the best care possible. If we find a problem, we fix it.	If Patient still refuses, DON'T SAY - I'll just code as a declined.	Declined

Tougher Questions (*cont'd*).

Patient Response	Suggested Response	Hints	Code
" Are you saying that this has happened at _____?"	We don't know, but we want to make sure that all our patients get the best care possible. We are part of a national research study to help make sure that doesn't happen.		
"Who looks at this?"	The only people who see this information are registration staff, administrators for the hospital, and the people involved in quality improvement.		
"Are you trying to find out if I'm a US citizen?"	No. Definitely not!! Also, you should know that the confidentiality of what you say is protected by law, and we do not share this information with anyone.		

What if the patient presents a race/ethnicity that is not on the table?

- Code as “unknown or unable to answer” or add as a text response so you can track this information.
- Staff should flag this (e.g., record this information)—if this happens frequently, it may indicate a new category needs to be added to the coding scheme.

Provide contact information of “point person” for any questions or concerns that may come up.