

# How to Respond to a Request for, or Refusal of, Health Care Professionals with Specific Characteristics

## Overview

OHSU is an affirmative action and equal opportunity employer. We value diversity in our community and want to ensure that all of our team members are included and supported. Use clarifying language if you think someone is being discriminatory to address the situation, then be sure to report the incident to the Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity Department (AEO) at aeo@ohsu.edu or 503-494-5148. Below are scripts you can use to respond to possible discrimination.

### **Responding to a request for, or refusal of, a health care professional with specific characteristics:**

1. *Acknowledge and clarify if the request for, or refusal of, a different health care professional is discriminatory:*
  - a. I want to be sure I understand the reason for your request. Are you saying that you want a different provider/caregiver because of their <gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.>?  

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2. *Take action:*
  - a. If no, identify the behaviors of the health care professional that the patient would like to change: "I see you have some specific requests to improve your care. Let's work together with <caregiver/provider name> so we can try to meet your expectations. I'll ask <employee name> to come in so we can all talk about your request." OR "Let me contact your nurse and <employee name> so they can talk to you about your requests."
  - b. If yes, focus on relevant facts/mirror mutual respect: "I want to reassure you that all of our team members are competent and skilled. We all are specially trained to provide you with the care you need. At OHSU, we care for all individuals who need our services, and we respect all of our team members. I would be glad to (or glad to contact your nurse to) address any specific requests you feel are important to your medical care."  

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3. *Reclarify your stance, if you meet resistance:*
  - a. I understand that you do not want <employee name> to care for you because of their <gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.>. However, respect for all, both patients and our team members, means that we do not change our care teams based on a patient's preference for specific characteristics of our team members that is unrelated to medical need or modesty concerns.
  - b. *If person continues to object:* If you would like, I can put you in touch with the Patient Advocate's Office (or Administrator on Duty, if outside of normal business hours).  

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4. *Follow up with the team member who may have experienced discrimination:*
  - a. I heard/know that <patient name> said/did something that may have been hurtful or distressing to you. I want to let you know that their behavior is not acceptable to me and I am here to support you if you would like. You are a valuable member of my community and an asset to my team.

- b. You may also refer the team member to the "Requests for, or Refusal of, Healthcare Professionals or Other Personnel with Specific Characteristics" policy for information on resources that are available to him or her.
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