


# Massachusetts Perspective on the Collection and Use of Racial and Ethnic Data



A Presentation for:

## **WHO COUNTS: The Classification and Application of Race and Ethnicity in Public Health Data**

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# Presentation overview



- Brief comments about the 1997 Revised Standards for the collection and tabulation of race and ethnicity data
- Federal-state differences in the collection, tabulation, and use of race and ethnicity data
- the Massachusetts perspective:  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) principles and practice

# Revised Standards in historical context

- Lessons for states in implementing standards
  - race categories change regularly over time
  - race categories determined by social and cultural context
  - ethnicity and national origin categories
    - more stable over time
    - change to reflect changing demographics, not social and cultural context
    - highly salient to state and local public health practice

Ref: American Anthropological Association: "Response to OMB 15", [www.aaanet.org/gvt/ombdraft.htm](http://www.aaanet.org/gvt/ombdraft.htm)

# Race Categories: Revised Standards vs. OMB 15

## 1997

- white
- black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

## 1977

- white
- black
- American Indian
- Asian or Pacific Islander

NOTE: Only the US Census Bureau for the purpose of the Census 2000 and NCHS for the 2003 revised standard certificates of birth and death have been granted variances to include an "other" category

# Census 2000: Ethnicity Question

- Is person 1 Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?  
*Mark x in the "No" box if not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.*
  - No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
  - Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
  - Yes, Puerto Rican
  - Yes, Cuban
  - Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic Latino- print group.

# Census 2000: Race question

■ What is Person 1's race? *Mark x in one or more races*

- White
- Black, African American or Negro
- American Indian or Alaska Native- *print name of enrolled or principal tribe*
- Asian Indian
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Japanese
- Korean
- Vietnamese
- Other Asian- *print race*
- Native Hawaiian
- Guamanian or Chamorro
- Samoan
- Other Pacific Islander- *print race*
- Some other race- *print race*

# Why these Census race categories?



	<u>US %</u>	<u>MA %</u>
Asian Indian	0.6	0.7
Filipino	0.7	0.1
Japanese	0.4	0.2
Korean	0.4	0.3
Native Hawaiian	0.05	0.009
Guamanian/Chamorro	0.02	0.009
Samoaan	0.03	0.008

source: US Census Bureau, 2000

# Revised Standards: State vs. Federal Perspective



# Impact of Revised Standards on public health practice: state needs

- more detailed ethnicity data for service targeting to high risk individuals and high risk communities
- measuring variation in health status and outcomes by ethnicity--identifying disparities
- methods for dealing with unique populations: in Massachusetts, Cape Verdeans, Dominicans
- age\sex\race intercensal denominators
- Uniform guidance from DHHS for implementation for collection issues and for tabulation

# Impact of Revised Standards on public health practice: Federal-state differences

- proportions of self-report, observation, and record review-based data sets differ in States
- main federal interest--presenting state level data; main state interest--presenting small area data
- states less likely to use imputation techniques for missing data or probabilistic and fractional assignment methods for bridging

