

CHAPTER 412

(House Bill 524)

AN ACT concerning

Workgroup on Cultural Competency and Workforce Development for Mental Health Professionals

FOR the purpose of requiring the Mental Health Transformation Working Group, in collaboration with the Mental Hygiene Administration and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, to convene a Workgroup on Cultural Competency and Workforce Development for Mental Health Professionals; requiring the Workgroup to include representatives from certain groups; providing for the purpose and goals of the Workgroup; requiring the Workgroup to develop certain recommendations; requiring the Workgroup to submit a certain report to the ~~Governor and Governor~~, the General Assembly, and a certain committee on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the Workgroup on Cultural Competency and Workforce Development for Mental Health Professionals.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That:

(a) The Mental Health Transformation Working Group, in collaboration with the Mental Hygiene Administration and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, shall convene a Workgroup on Cultural Competency and Workforce Development for Mental Health Professionals.

(b) The Workgroup shall include representatives from:

- (1) the Senate of Maryland and House of Delegates of Maryland;
- (2) the relevant professional licensing boards;
- (3) mental health care provider groups;
- (4) consumer groups with knowledge or experience with mental health care issues or health care for minority populations;

(5) advocacy groups with knowledge or experience with mental health care issues or health care for minority populations; ~~and~~

(6) any interest group or stakeholder with knowledge or involvement in the issues addressed by the Workgroup;

(7) the Statewide Commission on the Shortage in the Healthcare Workforce;

(8) the Governor's Workforce Investment Board or other groups working on health workforce shortage issues; and

(9) State and other organizations that represent minority health professionals.

(c) The purposes and goals of the Workgroup shall be to examine:

(1) barriers to access to appropriate mental health services provided by health care professionals who are culturally competent to address the needs of the State's diverse population;

(2) barriers to licensure or certification of foreign-born and foreign-trained mental health professionals;

(3) initiatives from other states for the facilitation of licensure or certification of foreign-born and foreign-trained mental health professionals;

(4) mental health workforce shortages and potential strategies to use foreign-born and foreign-trained mental health professionals to alleviate shortages; and

(5) options for enhancing the cultural competency of currently licensed and certified mental health professionals.

(d) The Workgroup shall develop recommendations regarding:

(1) the availability of specific options to facilitate the licensure or certification of foreign-born and foreign-trained mental health professionals within the limitations of State and federal law;

(2) the development of training programs to assist foreign-born and foreign-trained mental health professionals to prepare for and pass required licensure or certification examinations;

(3) the development of specific training and educational materials and programs to enhance the cultural competency of all mental health professionals;

(4) ~~changes to~~ the advantages and disadvantages of changing the current licensing and certification requirements for relevant professional licensing boards; and

(5) any other initiatives that will accomplish enhanced access to culturally sensitive and competent mental health services.

(e) The Workgroup shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly and the Joint Committee on Access to Mental Health Services, on or before November 1, 2007.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2007. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of June 30, 2008, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved by the Governor, May 8, 2007.