

## **Chapter 671**

**(House Bill 679)**

AN ACT concerning

### **Cultural Competency and Health Literacy – Education**

FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to work collaboratively with certain universities and colleges of social work, public health, and allied health to develop certain courses; changing the name of the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Provider Competency Program to be the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Professional Competency Program; altering the purpose of the Program; including a certain association and certain entities among the groups that are encouraged to identify, develop, or collaborate in the development of certain training programs; altering the requirements for certain training programs; altering certain definitions; requiring a certain report from certain universities, colleges, and higher education programs to certain committees of the General Assembly and the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities on or before a certain date; and generally relating to cultural and linguistic competency and health literacy.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
Article – Health – General  
Section 20–1001(a) and (d)  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2009 Replacement Volume and 2011 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
Article – Health – General  
Section 20–1004(15) and 20–1301 through 20–1304  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2009 Replacement Volume and 2011 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

#### **Article – Health – General**

20–1001.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(d) “Office” means the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities established under § 20–1002 of this subtitle.

20–1004.

The Office shall:

(15) Work collaboratively with universities and colleges of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, [and] dentistry, **SOCIAL WORK, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND ALLIED HEALTH** in this State and other health care professional training programs to develop courses with cultural competency, sensitivity, and health literacy, that are designed to address the problem of racial and ethnic disparities in health care access, utilization, treatment decisions, quality, and outcomes;

20–1301.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(b) “Cultural and linguistic competency” means cultural and linguistic abilities that can be incorporated into therapeutic and medical evaluation and treatment, including:

(1) Direct communication in the patient’s primary language;

(2) Understanding and applying the roles that culture, ethnicity, and race play in diagnosis, treatment, and clinical care; and

(3) Awareness of how the attitudes, values, and beliefs of health care providers and patients influence and impact professional and patient relations.

(c) “Health care [provider] **PROFESSIONAL**” includes a physician, nurse, dentist, social worker, psychologist, **PHARMACIST, HEALTH EDUCATOR**, or other allied health professional.

(d) “Program” means the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care [Provider] **PROFESSIONAL** Competency Program.

20–1302.

(a) There is a Cultural and Linguistic Health Care [Provider] **PROFESSIONAL** Competency Program.

(b) The purpose of the Program is to provide for a voluntary program in which educational classes are offered to health care [providers] **PROFESSIONALS** to teach health care [providers] **PROFESSIONALS**:

- (1) Methods to improve the health care [provider's] **PROFESSIONALS'** cultural and linguistic competency to communicate with non-English speaking patients and patients from other cultures who are English speaking;
- (2) Cultural beliefs and practices that may impact patient health care practices and allow health care [providers] **PROFESSIONALS** to incorporate the knowledge of the beliefs and practices in the diagnosis and treatment of patients; and
- (3) Methods to enable health care [providers] **PROFESSIONALS** to increase the health literacy of their patients to improve the patient's ability to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health care decisions.

20-1303.

The Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland, the State Medical Society, the Maryland Nurses Association, the Maryland State Dental Association, the National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter, the ~~Maryland Society for Clinical Social Work~~ Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition, the Maryland Psychological Association, **THE MARYLAND PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION**, or any other health professional association **OR PUBLIC HEALTH ENTITY** in the State is encouraged to identify training programs, or, if feasible, to develop or collaborate in the development of training programs, that:

- (1) Address ethnic language or racial groups of interest to the health care [provider] **PROFESSIONAL** members;
- (2) Are based on the established knowledge of health care [providers] **PROFESSIONALS** serving target populations;
- (3) Are developed in collaboration with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities; and
- (4) Include standards that identify the degree of competency for participants to qualify for completion of a program.

20-1304.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene shall develop a method through which the appropriate professional licensing board recognizes the training received by health care [providers] **PROFESSIONALS** under this subtitle, either through continuing education credits or otherwise.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before December 1, 2012, universities, colleges, and higher education programs of medicine, nursing,

pharmacy, dentistry, social work, public health, and allied health in the State shall report, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, the House Health and Government Operations Committee, and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities on the courses that have been developed independently by the colleges, universities, and higher education programs or through a collaboration with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities under § 20-1004(15) of the Health – General Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2012.

**Approved by the Governor, May 22, 2012.**