

# SENATE BILL 796

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By: **Senator Eckardt**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2021

Assigned to: Finance

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities and Maryland**  
3 **Health Care Commission – Reporting Requirements**

4 FOR the purpose of altering a certain provision of law requiring the Maryland Office of  
5 Minority Health and Health Disparities to collaborate with the Maryland Health  
6 Care Commission to publish and provide a certain report card to require the report  
7 card to include the racial and ethnic composition of all individuals who hold a certain  
8 license or certificate, rather than only physicians; requiring the report card to include  
9 a comparison of certain information; requiring the Office, in coordination with the  
10 Commission and the Maryland Department of Health, to submit to the General  
11 Assembly a certain plan on or before a certain date; and generally relating to public  
12 health data and race and ethnicity information.

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
14 Article – Health – General  
15 Section 20–1004  
16 Annotated Code of Maryland  
17 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

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

20 **Article – Health – General**

21 20–1004.

22 The Office shall:

23 (1) Be an advocate for the improvement of minority health care by working  
24 with the Department on its own, or in partnership with other public and private entities to  
25 establish appropriate forums, programs, or initiatives designed to educate the public

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 regarding minority health and health disparities issues, with an emphasis on preventive  
2 health and healthy lifestyles;

3 (2) Assist the Secretary in identifying, coordinating, and establishing  
4 priorities for programs, services, and resources that the State should provide for minority  
5 health and health disparities issues;

6 (3) Collect, classify, and analyze relevant research information and data  
7 collected or compiled by:

8 (i) The Department;

9 (ii) The Department in collaboration with others; and

10 (iii) Other public and private entities;

11 (4) Research innovative methods and obtain resources to improve existing  
12 data systems to ensure that the health information that is collected includes specific race  
13 and ethnicity identifiers;

14 (5) Serve as a clearinghouse and resource library for information about  
15 minority health and health disparities data, strategies, services, and programs that  
16 address minority health and health disparities issues;

17 (6) Develop a strategic plan to improve public services and programs  
18 targeting minorities;

19 (7) Obtain funding and, contingent upon funding, provide grants to  
20 community-based organizations and historically black colleges and universities to conduct  
21 special research, demonstration, and evaluation projects for targeted at-risk racial and  
22 ethnic minority populations and to support ongoing community-based programs that are  
23 designed to reduce or eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities in the State;

24 (8) Develop criteria for the awarding of grants for programs that are  
25 designed to improve minority health care;

26 (9) Review existing laws and regulations to ensure that they facilitate the  
27 provision of adequate health care to the minorities of this State;

28 (10) Recommend to the Secretary any additions or changes to existing laws  
29 and regulations designed to facilitate the adequate provision of health care to minorities in  
30 this State;

31 (11) Identify and review health promotion and disease prevention strategies  
32 relating to the leading health causes of death and disability among minority populations;

33 (12) Develop and implement model public and private partnerships in racial

1 and ethnic minority communities for health awareness campaigns and to improve the  
2 access, acceptability, and use of public health services;

3 (13) Develop recommendations for the most effective means of providing  
4 outreach to racial and ethnic minority communities throughout the State to ensure their  
5 maximum participation in publicly funded health benefits programs;

6 (14) Develop a statewide plan for increasing the number of racial and ethnic  
7 minority health care professionals which includes recommendations for the financing  
8 mechanisms and recruitment strategies necessary to carry out the plan;

9 (15) Work collaboratively with universities and colleges of medicine,  
10 nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, social work, public health, and allied health in this State and  
11 other health care professional training programs to develop courses with cultural  
12 competency, sensitivity, and health literacy, that are designed to address the problem of  
13 racial and ethnic disparities in health care access, utilization, treatment decisions, quality,  
14 and outcomes;

15 (16) Work collaboratively with the Maryland Health Care Disparities  
16 Initiative, the Morgan–Hopkins Center for Health Disparities Solutions, the University of  
17 Maryland Disparity Project, the Monumental City Medical Society, faculty and researchers  
18 at historically black colleges and universities, and other existing alliances or plans, to  
19 reduce or eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in the State;

20 (17) Seek to establish a statewide alliance with community–based agencies  
21 and organizations, historically black colleges and universities, health care facilities, health  
22 care provider organizations, managed care organizations, and pharmaceutical  
23 manufacturers to promote the objectives of the Office;

24 (18) Evaluate multicultural or racial and ethnic minority health programs  
25 in other states to assess their efficacy and potential for replication in this State and make  
26 recommendations regarding the adoption of such programs, as appropriate;

27 (19) Apply for and accept any grant of money from the federal government,  
28 private foundations, or other sources which may be available for programs related to  
29 minority health and health disparities;

30 (20) Serve as the designated State agency for receipt of federal funds  
31 specifically designated for minority health and health disparities programs;

32 (21) Work collaboratively with the Governor’s Office of Small, Minority, and  
33 Women Business Affairs as the Office determines necessary; and

34 (22) In collaboration with the Maryland Health Care Commission, publish  
35 annually on the Department’s website and provide in writing on request a “Health Care  
36 Disparities Policy Report Card” that includes:

1 (i) An analysis of racial and ethnic variations in insurance coverage  
2 for low-income, nonelderly individuals;

3 (ii) The racial and ethnic composition of the [physician population]  
4 **INDIVIDUALS WHO HOLD A LICENSE OR CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY A HEALTH**  
5 **OCCUPATIONS BOARD ESTABLISHED UNDER THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE**  
6 compared to the racial and ethnic composition of the State's population; [and]

7 (iii) The racial and ethnic disparities in morbidity and mortality rates  
8 for cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality, asthma, and other  
9 diseases identified by the Maryland Health Care Commission; **AND**

10 **(IV) A COMPARISON OF THE INFORMATION INCLUDED UNDER**  
11 **ITEMS (I) AND (II) OF THIS ITEM WITH PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED "HEALTH CARE**  
12 **DISPARITIES POLICY REPORT CARDS" INCLUDING THE SAME INFORMATION.**

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before December 31,  
14 2021, the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities shall, in coordination  
15 with the Maryland Health Care Commission and the Maryland Department of Health,  
16 submit to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government  
17 Article, a plan that reflects the State's current goals and implementations to eliminate  
18 minority health disparities.

19 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
20 October 1, 2021.