

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader

House Bill 97 (Delegate Amprey)

Health and Government Operations

Finance

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Workgroup on Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander, and Other  
Underrepresented Behavioral Health Professionals

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This bill establishes the Workgroup on Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander, and Other Underrepresented Behavioral Health Professionals. The University System of Maryland (USM) and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) must jointly provide staff for the workgroup. A member of the workgroup or any established subgroup of the workgroup may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under standard State travel regulations. The workgroup must submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1, 2023. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2022, and terminates June 30, 2024.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for members of the workgroup or a subgroup of the workgroup and staffing costs for USM and MDH are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The workgroup must identify and study the shortage of behavioral health professionals in the State who are Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander, or otherwise underrepresented in the behavioral health profession. The workgroup must also assess and make recommendations on incentives or other methods to increase the number

of (1) specified or underrepresented students who study at an institution of higher education in the State to be behavioral health professionals and (2) specified or underrepresented behavioral health professionals who provide behavioral health services in the State, especially in underserved communities.

The workgroup may establish a subgroup within the workgroup to assist in carrying out the workgroup's duties, including by conducting research and producing reports. A subgroup may include an individual who is not a member of the workgroup.

**Current Law:** The Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities was established within MDH in 2004. The purpose of the office is to address social determinants of health and eliminate health disparities by leveraging resources, providing health equity consultation, impacting external communications, guiding policy decisions, and influencing strategic direction on behalf of the Secretary of Health.

In 2007, the Workgroup on Cultural Competency and Workforce Development for Mental Health Professionals convened to examine (1) barriers to accessing mental health services by culturally competent health care professionals; (2) barriers to licensure or certification for foreign-born and foreign-trained mental health professionals; (3) other states' initiatives to facilitate licensure or certification of specified professionals; (4) mental health workforce shortages and the potential strategies for using specified professionals to alleviate the shortages; and (5) options for enhancing currently licensed and certified mental health professionals' cultural competency. A copy of the workgroup's final report can be located [here](#).

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** HB 915 of 2021 passed in the House and received a hearing in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, but no further action was taken.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** University System of Maryland; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 17, 2022  
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