

SENATE BILL 458

J1, J2

5lr2047
CF 5lr2111

By: **Senator Gile**

Introduced and read first time: January 21, 2025

Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Health Occupations – Structural Racism Training

FOR the purpose of requiring applicants for renewal of certain licenses and certain certificates issued by certain health occupation boards to attest that the applicant completed an implicit bias and structural racism training program, rather than an implicit bias training program, approved by the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Professional Competency Program; and generally relating to structural racism training programs.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Health – General
Section 20–1301, 20–1302, and 20–1306
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Health Occupations
Section 1–225
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2021 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

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

Article – Health – General

20–1301.

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

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(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 professional” includes a physician, nurse, dentist, social worker, psychologist, pharmacist, health educator, or other allied health professional.

(d) “Implicit bias” means a bias in judgment that results from subtle cognitive processes, including the following prejudices and stereotypes that often operate at a level below conscious awareness and without intentional control:

- (1) Prejudicial negative feelings or beliefs about a group that an individual holds without being aware of the feelings or beliefs; and
- (2) Unconscious attributions of particular qualities to a member of a specific social group that are influenced by experience and based on learned associations between various qualities and social categories, including race and gender.

(e) “Program” means the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Professional Competency Program.

(F) “STRUCTURAL RACISM” MEANS A SYSTEM OF INHERITED INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS THAT PROVIDE DIFFERENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, AND THE ENVIRONMENT TO AN INDIVIDUAL BASED ON THE INDIVIDUAL’S RACE.

20–1302.

(a) There is a Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Professional Competency Program.

(b) The purpose of the Program is to:

(1) Provide for a voluntary program in which educational classes are offered to health care professionals to teach health care professionals:

(i) Methods to improve the health care professionals’ cultural and linguistic competency to communicate with non–English speaking patients and patients from other cultures who are English speaking;

(ii) Cultural beliefs and practices that may impact patient health care practices and allow health care professionals to incorporate the knowledge of the beliefs and practices in the diagnosis and treatment of patients; and

(iii) Methods to enable health care 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;

(2) Establish and provide an evidence-based implicit bias training program for health care professionals involved in the perinatal care of patients under § 20–1305 of this subtitle; and

(3) Identify and approve implicit bias **AND STRUCTURAL RACISM** training programs for health occupation licensure and certification under § 1–225 of the Health Occupations Article.

20–1306.

(a) (1) The Program shall, in coordination with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, identify and approve implicit bias **AND STRUCTURAL RACISM** training programs that an individual may complete to satisfy the requirements of § 1–225 of the Health Occupations Article.

(2) The Program may approve only implicit bias **AND STRUCTURAL RACISM** training programs under paragraph (1) of this subsection that are recognized by a health occupations board established under the Health Occupations Article or accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education.

(b) The Program shall provide a list of training programs approved under subsection (a) of this section on request.

Article – Health Occupations

1–225.

(a) **[An] SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION, AN** applicant for the renewal of a license or certificate issued by a health occupations board under this article shall attest in the application that the applicant has completed an implicit bias **AND STRUCTURAL RACISM** training program approved by the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Professional Competency Program under § 20–1306 of the Health – General Article.

(b) The **[requirements of] REQUIREMENT UNDER** subsection (a) of this section **THAT AN APPLICANT ATTEST TO THE COMPLETION OF AN IMPLICIT BIAS AND STRUCTURAL RACISM TRAINING PROGRAM** shall apply only to an applicant's first license or certificate renewal after April 1, **[2022] 2026**.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, if an applicant for the renewal of a license or certificate issued by a health occupations board under the Health Occupations Article is applying on or after the effective date of this Act but before April 1, 2026, for the applicant's first license or certificate renewal, the applicant shall attest in the application that the applicant has completed an implicit bias training program approved by the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Professional Competency Program under § 20-1306 of the Health – General Article.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2025.