



Board of Physicians

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary

February 26, 2020

The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
240 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: HB 639 – Public Health – Health Care Professionals – Cultural Competency Coursework or Training– Letter of Concern

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Board of Physicians (the “Board”) is submitting this Letter of Concern for House Bill 639 – Public Health – Health Care Professionals – Cultural Competency Coursework or Training.

The Board supports the bill's goal that each health care professional who provides direct medical services to a patient in the state shall complete coursework or training on cultural awareness, and competence in the provision of medical services for a health care professional. However, under §14-316(d)(5) of the Maryland Medical Practice Act, the Board is prohibited from requiring licensees to complete specific courses or programs as a condition of license renewal.

In addition to physicians, the Board licenses eleven (11) allied health professions. The allied health licensees renew at different times throughout the year, and current law requires licensees to obtain continuing education credits prior to submitting their renewal applications. The added requirement to validate coursework or training unrelated to required continuing education at the time of license renewal would delay and complicate the process. To be effective, the proposed changes under HB 639 to the Board's license renewal process would require considerable staff time and expense to modify existing Board operations. Additionally, it is unknown how the Board would verify the exemptions in the bill.

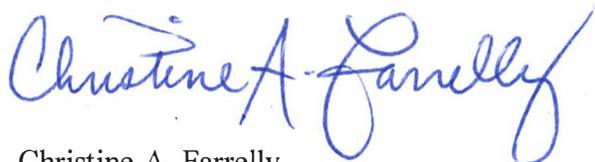
Lastly, the Board licensees are already subject to a variety of assessments and fees and the imposition of an additional \$5 fee from each health care professional seems excessive.

The Board currently posts a broad range of information and educational courses on the website and would be agreeable to adding recommended courses to the list of resources. However, the Board believes that posting courses on the website would not be as effective as integrating all aspects of cultural competency training into the curriculum of the educational programs of the

various practitioners licensed by the Board. In that regard, the Board recommends that this issue be brought to the attention of deans and directors of health care practitioner education programs.

Thank you for your consideration of this information. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Wynne E. Hawk at 410-764-3786.

Sincerely,



Christine A. Farrelly
Executive Director

cc: Health and Government Operations Committee Members
Webster Ye, MDH

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Maryland Department of Health or the Administration.