



Senate Bill 565
Public Health – Data – Race and Ethnicity Information

Before the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 16, 2021

POSITION: SUPPORT

The University of Maryland Medical System (“UMMS”) supports SB 565. This bill would enhance the collection of health data by race and ethnicity to help promote equity in healthcare. It would further require the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (“the Office”) to coordinate with the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Health Care Commission to assess data on an annual basis as a means of informing the Office’s programs. And finally, it would facilitate a clearer picture of the racial and ethnic composition of the state’s healthcare workforce by requiring data collection by the health occupation boards.

SB 565 is part of a series of bills this session that together can have a meaningful impact on the equitable delivery of health care and health outcomes. This is an issue whose time has come.

Data collection is foundational to addressing any issue, health care amongst them. It imperative that the state take a serious look at the data regarding race and ethnicity in health care generally. And more specifically, there is a wealth of data that support the notion that patients fare better when cared for and engaged in patient-provider relationships with providers who are of the same race/ethnicity. To that end, having a firm grasp on the composition of the workforce in Maryland is key.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the havoc it is waging on minority communities across the country illuminate the magnitude of the equity in care issues in this country. Maryland has always been a progressive state and a leader in healthcare. The state should continue to stay at the forefront. It is imperative that we address these issues systematically and with precision to ensure productive, positive health outcomes for all communities. Intelligent data collection is key to this effort.

For these and other reasons, the University of Maryland Medical System urges a favorable vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna L. Jacobs, Esq.
SVP, Government, Regulatory Affairs and Community Health
250 W. Pratt Street
Baltimore, MD, 21201
djacobs@umm.edu