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Budget and Taxation Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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

Testimony of Senator Melony Griffith (Favorable)

Good afternoon, Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. I am pleased to present Senate bill 565, which improves how race and ethnicity data is collected and published by Maryland health agencies.

Senate Bill 565 requires the Director of the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (OMHHD) to meet with representatives from the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) at least once annually to examine how health data related to race and ethnicity information is collected and to identify areas of improvement.

SB 565 will make improvements for a more accurate collection and analysis of demographic health data by requiring:

1. OMMHD to respond to requests for health data including race and ethnicity information within 30 days after receipt of the request.
2. OMMHD, along with MHCC and MDH to implement an updated data collection plan by January 1, 2022, including provisions to improve the collection of health data, ensure that OMMHD has access to up-to-date health data, post health data on the OMMHD website, and update the website data every 6 months.
3. OMMHD to publish the *Health Care Disparities Policy Report Card* that includes the racial and ethnic self-identifiers of anyone holding a license or certificate issued by a health occupations board and compare it to that of the State's population. OMMHD is currently required to collect data regarding health disparities and publish a report card. Under SB565, future report cards will be expanded to include the latter information.
4. Each health occupations board to include the option to provide race and ethnicity information on application and renewal forms

Senate Bill 565 is based on the first recommendation of Healthcare Disparities from the Senate President's Advisory Workgroup on Equity and Inclusion. Through your support of this bill, we can continue to find solutions to decrease health disparities amongst racial and ethnic minorities in Maryland. Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 565. I respectfully request a favorable report.