



MARYLAND CITIZENS' HEALTH INITIATIVE

2600 ST. PAUL STREET BALTIMORE, MD 21218

P: (410) 235-9000

F: (410) 235-8963

WWW.HEALTHCAREFORALL.COM

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 5

Public Health – Implicit Bias Training and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities
Before the Finance Committee

By Stephanie Klapper, Deputy Director, Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative, Inc.
February 2, 2021

Madam Chair and Members of the Finance Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 5, which would require health providers to undergo implicit bias training and require that the Office of Minority Health and Disparities regularly public health data that include race and ethnicity.

A growing body of evidence shows the social and cultural forces that unconsciously create race--based implicit biases within individuals, affect how health care practitioners make decisions and deliver services, which contributes to the widening of racial health disparities in this country.^{1,2} No one is immune to the unconscious development of implicit biases. Implicit bias training will help set up health care practitioners for success in providing quality care to all Marylanders. The seriousness of the issue and its documented contribution to inequities in health outcomes requires the immediate attention of our State and health care practices in order to ensure that we are taking measurable steps to reverse this trend. We believe that SB 5 takes an effective step at reducing the impact of implicit bias in health care delivery in Maryland.

In addition, as Maryland takes steps to improve health equity in Maryland, it is important that the state provide timely relevant data to the public so that we may see where the state is making progress, and where there remains work to be done.

Thank you again to the committee for your recognized efforts toward improving access to quality, affordable health care for all Marylanders. We urge a favorable report from the Committee on Senate Bill 5.

¹ Chapman E, Kaatz A, Carnes M. Physicians and Implicit Bias: How Doctors May Unwittingly Perpetuate Health Care Disparities. *J Gen Intern Med.* 2013; 28: 1504---10. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23576243/>

² Hall, W. J., Chapman, M. V., Lee, K. M., Merino, Y. M., Thomas, T. W., Payne, B. K., Eng, E., Day, S. H., & Coyne-Beasley, T. (2015). Implicit Racial/Ethnic Bias Among Health Care Professionals and Its Influence on Health Care Outcomes: A Systematic Review. *American journal of public health, 105*(12), e60–e76. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302903>