

Deborah Rivkin
Vice President
Government Affairs – Maryland

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield
1501 S. Clinton Street, Suite 700
Baltimore, MD 21224-5744
Tel. 410-528-7054
Fax 410-528-7981



SB 5 - Public Health – Implicit Bias Training and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities

Position: Support

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments in support of Senate Bill 5. This bill requires that an applicant for the renewal of a license or certificate issued by a Health Occupations Board 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. The bill defines “implicit bias” as: 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.

CareFirst is focused on driving the transformation of the health care experience with and for our members and communities. Structural racism is undeniably among the most sinister and ongoing drivers of our public health crisis which is exacerbated in the middle of an unprecedented pandemic. It is also at the root of deep disparities in social, economic, and health outcomes particularly. Prejudicial negative feelings or beliefs and unconscious attributions about any social group, intentional or not, deteriorates access to and the quality of care for our members.

By requiring provider training explicitly designed to educate health care professionals on implicit bias, Senate Bill 5 represents an important step in combatting health disparities.

CareFirst looks forward to working with legislators, public health groups and other partners to address implicit bias and the many other inequities that exist health care delivery system, as we continue to employ targeted health equity strategies within our own organization to advance the health of our members and communities.

We urge a favorable report.

About CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

In its 83rd year of service, CareFirst, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is a not-for-profit healthcare company which, through its affiliates and subsidiaries, offers a comprehensive portfolio of health insurance products and administrative services to 3.4 million individuals and employers in Maryland, the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. In 2019, CareFirst invested \$43 million to improve overall health, and increase the accessibility, affordability, safety and quality of healthcare throughout its market areas. To learn more about CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, visit our website at www.carefirst.com and our transforming healthcare page at www.carefirst.com/transformation, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Instagram](#).