

STATE OF MARYLAND



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MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

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February 2, 2021

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 5 – Public Health – Implicit Bias Training and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Kelley and Committee Members:

The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) is submitting this letter of support for Senate Bill 5 (SB 5) – Public Health – Implicit Bias Training and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities.

Research has shown that implicit bias can negatively impact both patient experience and patient outcomes. This bill requires the implementation of training programs for health care professionals on implicit bias in the delivery of health care services. The bill applies to health care professions including physicians, nurses, dentists, social workers, psychologists, pharmacists, health educators and other allied health professions. The training would be incorporated as a requirement in the health occupations licensure and certification process. MHCC supports the requirements in SB 5 and believe the training will reduce health care disparities in Maryland.

The bill further requires the MHCC and the Maryland Department of Health Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (OMHHD) to annually publish a “Health Care Disparities Policy Report Card”. The report is intended to track Maryland’s progress in reducing disparities in access to insurance coverage, the distribution of the healthcare professionals by race and ethnicity, and the continuing differences in morbidity and mortality for various medical conditions that deserve remediation.

MHCC supports this bill as it aligns with work already underway related to our data collection and public reporting initiatives. The MHCC maintains a consumer website that provides quality and performance information on hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities and other health care providers. A major redesign is now underway. Should SB 5 pass, we are

committed to expanding the focus on health disparities in the newly redesigned website. A partnership with OMHHD will enable the organizations to identify effective strategies for collecting, analyzing, and reporting information to the public that facilitates and promotes health equity. We believe that publicly reporting of this information will promote informed decision making among users of health care services and enable policymakers to track progress in achieving health equity.

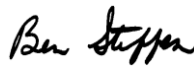
Other states, including Virginia, have taken major steps in developing that track progress in achieving health equity. Now is the time for Maryland to follow the lead of those states.

If you would like to discuss this legislation or our existing efforts, please contact Ben Steffen, Executive Director, Maryland Health Care Commission at ben.steffen@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Andrew Pollack
Chair, MHCC



Ben Steffen
Executive Director, MHCC

cc: Senator Griffith
Finance Committee Members