



Nick J. Mosby, *President*
Baltimore City Council

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February 25, 2021

To: **Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee**
Re: **HB 915 – Workgroup on Black, Latino, and Other Underrepresented Mental Health Professionals**
Position: **FAVORABLE**

Chair Pendergrass and Honorable Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee,

I am writing to express my **support** for House Bill 915, Workgroup on Black, Latino, and Other Underrepresented Mental Health Professionals. This bill seeks to compose a workgroup of key stakeholders in the mental health profession, mental health providers; and valued leaders from our Historical Black Colleges and Universities to understand factors that contribute to the shortage of Black, Latino, and otherwise underrepresented mental health professionals in our state. The workgroup will also work to identify methodologies to increase the number of Black, Latino, and otherwise underrepresented students who are studying to become mental health professionals and the needs of current Black, Latino, or otherwise underrepresented mental health professionals who provide vital mental health services in our State.

Taking steps to create and retain a diverse mental health workforce is a critical step towards addressing implicit bias in the mental health profession, which subsequently creates barriers to care. Addressing these barriers will in return foster feelings of trust in underserved communities and empowers residents in need to seek mental health services.

It is my belief, for our state to intentionally work to diversify our mental health profession, we must take time to truly study and develop sound recommendations for implementation to address barriers our Black, Latino, and underrepresented students and mental health professionals face when entering the mental health workforce and providing care. This legislation provides for this opportunity and is timely as we know the effects of the coronavirus pandemic has increased additional stressors for our residents and their connection to a trusted mental health provider can be lifesaving. I want to thank the committee for their consideration of my testimony and urge members to vote **favorable** on HB 915.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nick J. Mosby".

Nick J. Mosby
President, Baltimore City Council