



MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS
Serving Maryland and Delaware



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TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: January 26, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 309 – *Public Health – Data – Race and Ethnicity Information*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 309.

Access to data is a critical component of understanding and addressing health care disparities. House Bill 309 enhances data collection and analysis of race and ethnicity that will assist the State in addressing health disparities and inequity. The legislation requires the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (“Office”) to collaborate with the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) and professional licensing boards to publish the annual “Health Care Disparities Policy Report Card” which is to include data on the ethnic and racial composition of the health care provider community. Senate Bill 309 also requires the professional licensing boards to include in their licensing applications a request for information on race and ethnicity and further requires the boards to urge the professionals they oversee to provide the information. Finally the legislation requires that by January 1, 2022, the Office, in coordination with MHCC and the Maryland Department of Health, to establish and implement a plan for: (1) improving the collection of health data that includes race and ethnicity information in the State; (2) ensuring that the Office has access to up-to-date health data that includes race and ethnicity information; (3) to the extent authorized under federal and State privacy laws, posting health data that includes race and ethnicity information on the Office’s website; and (4) updating the data on the Office’s website at least once every 6 months.

The enhanced data collection and analysis required by House Bill 309 coupled with the requirements of publication and regular updates will assist policy makers and affected communities in addressing health care disparities and inequities. A favorable report is requested.

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