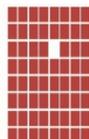




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MID-ATLANTIC
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Hospice & Palliative Care Network
OF MARYLAND



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

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: January 26, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 28 – *Public Health – Implicit Bias Training and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Academy of Family Physicians, the Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Maryland Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, the Hospice & Palliative Care Network of Maryland, the Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition, and the Maryland/District of Columbia Society for Respiratory Care, we submit this letter of **support with amendment**, as offered by the sponsor, for House Bill 28.

It is widely recognized that racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of their social determinants of health. Data consistently shows ongoing, and in some cases, growing health disparities in Maryland, including the impact of COVID-19, maternal morbidity and mortality, age-adjusted mortality from cancer and heart disease, and emergency department visits for substance use, asthma, diabetes, and hypertension. House Bill 28 proposes to enhance Maryland’s commitment to address health disparities by 1) expanding the data reporting requirements of the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (“Office”) to include racial and ethnic data in their annual “Health Care Disparities Policy Report Card” report, post the information on their website, and update the data every six months; 2) mandating an increase in the funding for the Office; and 3) requiring all licensed and certified health care professionals to complete an implicit bias training course approved by the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Professional Competency Program, in conjunction with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities that is recognized by a health occupations board or accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education. A health care provider must attest to the completion of an implicit bias training course on the provider’s first application for licensure renewal. As originally drafted, the bill would apply to all license renewals after October 1, 2021, the effective date of the bill. The amendment offered by the sponsor will require course completion for renewals after April 1, 2022, to allow time for the identification and approval of the training programs that a provider may take to meet the training requirement.

Addressing health disparities is a priority for the above-named organizations. Addressing implicit bias through provider training will contribute to improving the health outcomes and reducing the health disparities of Maryland’s racial and ethnic minorities. With the sponsors amendment noted, a favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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