



**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee  
**Bill Number:** House Bill 97  
**Title:** Workgroup on Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander, and Other Underrepresented Behavioral Health Professionals  
**Hearing Date:** January 20, 2022  
**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *House Bill 97 – Workgroup on Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander, and Other Underrepresented Behavioral Health Professionals*. The bill will establish a workgroup to study the shortages of behavioral health professionals in underrepresented groups, make recommendations to increase the number of underrepresented groups and report findings and recommendations to the Governor.

Nurses play an important role in behavioral health – from nurse psychotherapists to psychiatric nurses in acute units. MNA recognizes that success of the therapeutic relationship depends on many factors. Some individuals are more likely to be able to build relationships of trust when their behavioral health professional has a more similar background to them. Therefore, it is essential to ensure our behavioral health workforce reflects the communities we serve.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Suhani Chitalia at [schitalia@policypartners.net](mailto:schitalia@policypartners.net).