

HB1333_Health Equity Commission_Support.pdf

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DATE: 3/4/2024 **COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations**
BILL NO: House Bill 1333
BILL TITLE: Maryland Commission on Health Equity - Membership and Statewide Health Equity Plan
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports the Maryland Commission on Health Equity - Membership and Statewide Health Equity Plan

Bill Summary:

HB 1333 would require the Maryland Commission on Health Equity to develop and monitor the statewide health equity plan required under a cooperative grant funding agreement with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation; and requiring the Maryland Commission on Health Equity to coordinate with the Maryland Department of Health and the Health Services Cost Review Commission when establishing a certain advisory committee.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive, and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger's services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based, and community-based programs. Over 27,000 individuals receive services annually at Kennedy Krieger.

The vision for the Office for Health Equity Inclusion and Diversity (O-HEID) at Kennedy Krieger Institute is to promote the health and well-being of those who work and receive training and services at Kennedy Krieger Institute. The O-HEID uses evidence, culturally relevant, and equity-based approaches that assures diversity and inclusion. The O-HEID is working to establish collaboration, data, and metrics to address remediable disparities within our patient populations, policies, and practices.

Rationale:

Despite access to world-renowned healthcare institutions, many Marylanders continues to face many inequities from social determinants of health including poverty, food insecurity, racism, affordable housing, access to care, and more. Baltimore City per capita healthcare spending is 3 times as high as the national average, though life expectancy is 5 years lower compared to the national average.¹ In Maryland, 1 out of 8 children are living in poverty and the numbers are rising.² Additionally, over half of students in Maryland's public schools qualify for free and reduced-priced meals.³ Growing up in poverty is a significant threat to healthy child development and increases the risk of poor cognitive, academic, and other health outcomes for children.^{4,5}

Nationwide, 1 out of 5 children has a mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder,⁶ though only about 20 percent of these children receive the mental health services they need.⁷ In particular, children of color, children with disabilities, children identifying as LGBTQ+ and children living in households with incomes at the poverty level are at greater risk of bearing an undue burden of poor mental health outcomes due to scarcity of trained culturally responsive and trauma-informed mental health providers and other factors including socioeconomic disadvantage, racism, or immigration status.⁸⁻¹⁰ When living in areas of higher neighborhood deprivation, youth from Black, Hispanic/Latinx, or sexual and gender minority (SGM) backgrounds in our own state are most at risk for adverse childhood experiences.¹¹ Language barriers experienced by children from families with limited English proficiency also contribute to difficulties with accessing health care services, which negatively impacts patient safety, quality of care, and patient satisfaction.¹² Of course, these health disparities are further compounded by the ongoing local healthcare workforce crisis.¹³

Preventable racial and ethnic disparities resulting from inadequate care, lack of access, structural racism, and financial barriers are critical for our state to continue to study and address in a targeted manner to improve health equity across our state. We strongly believe that investing time and resources to improve the health of Marylanders, particularly our youth, will pay off in dividends in the future.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on House Bill 1333.

References

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Position: FAV



March 26, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: House Bill 1333 - Maryland Commission on Health Equity -
Membership and Statewide Health Equity Plan – Letter of Support**

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) requests that the Committee favorably report House Bill 1333, “Maryland Commission on Health Equity - Membership and Statewide Health Equity Plan.”

The State of Maryland is currently applying to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services for the AHEAD Model, which will be the successor to the current Total Cost of Care Model. Equity is integrated throughout the AHEAD model. The AHEAD Model requires both the State and hospitals to create health equity plans and specifies membership and duties of the entity that develops the State health equity plan. The HSCRC believes the Maryland Commission on Health Equity is the appropriate entity to lead the State’s efforts to develop the State Health Equity plan under the AHEAD Model.

HSCRC is committed to working with the Maryland Department of Health and other public and private partners to improve health equity in Maryland. The Commission urges a favorable report on HB 1333. If you have any questions or if I may provide you with any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-251-4211 or jon.kromm@maryland.gov, or Deb Rivkin, Director of Government Affairs, at 410-991-7422 or deborah.rivkin@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "JK" or similar initials.

Jon Kromm
Executive Director

Joshua Sharfstein, MD
Chairman

Joseph Antos, PhD
Vice-Chairman

James N. Elliott, MD

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Director
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**MARYLAND
COMMISSION
ON PUBLIC HEALTH**

Testimony in support of House Bill 1333

**HB1333 MARYLAND COMMISSION ON HEALTH EQUITY and COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC HEALTH-REVISION**

Before the Senate Finance Committee

BY: Maryland Commission on Public Health

Hearing Date: 03/26/2024

Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1333. This bill which establishes a commission to develop and monitor a certain state health equity plan, coordinate with the Maryland Department of Health, and the HealthServices Cost Review Commission, and altering the reporting requirements for the Commission on Public Health.

This legislation helps the state of Maryland as it continues to implement the total cost of care model, aids CoPH to leverage its resources and continue to plan to meet its objectives, as well as facilitates collaboration between members of the academic community , and health practitioners.

We urge a favorable report for House Bill 1333.

Sincerely,

Dr. Meenakshi Brewster,
MD, MPH, FAAFP

Dr. Boris Lushniak,
MD, MPH

Dr. Oluwatosin Olateju,
DrPH, MSN-CPHN, RN