



March 5, 2024

Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. My name is Sarah Stowens giving comments today in support of HB 1333 on behalf of ChristianaCare.

ChristianaCare has a long-standing commitment to advancing health equity. Our commitment to health equity shows in so much of the work that we do from point of admissions social drivers of health screens, to addressing the barriers identified through strategic programs, to our investment in community health workers, and investment of resources in community projects. We believe that to truly end health disparities, it will take the hard work of all invested stakeholders, and without that work, we cannot achieve the outcomes we desire in clinical care, quality and safety nor improve the health of the communities we serve. This collaborative approach ensures that policies and programs are culturally sensitive, responsive, and effective in reducing health disparities.

In that pursuit, the establishment of a Statewide Health Equity Commission is crucial. Such a commission serves as a dedicated body to address disparities in healthcare access, outcomes, and resources among different populations. A Statewide Health Equity Commission plays a pivotal role in advancing health equity by analyzing data, identifying disparities, and developing policies and strategies to address them. By focusing on the social drivers of health, such as socioeconomic status, education, and access to healthcare, the commission can work towards creating a more equitable healthcare system for all Marylanders.

Of course, including a diverse set of stakeholders including healthcare providers, community leaders, advocacy groups, researchers, and representatives from both marginalized and regional diverse perspectives is essential for ensuring that the commission's work is inclusive and representative of the state's population. Including such a swath of stakeholders will ensure that the unique health challenges and disparities Marylanders across the state face will be included in the solutions that consider local contexts and resources.

We are excited about the introduction of this legislation, the work that lies ahead, and hope for a favorable report for HB 1333.

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