



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 25, 2021

To: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair, House Health & Government Operations
Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 915- Workgroup on Black, Latino, and Other
Underrepresented Mental Health Professionals

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 915.

As part of MHA's [commitment to racial equity](#), Maryland hospitals are evaluating organizational values to ensure they promote equity and inclusion. We are working with members of our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Group and Health Equity Task Force to equip hospital leaders to address race while understanding their own biases. Hospitals are committed to embracing culturally competent care to address disparities in health outcomes and ensure all Marylanders have the opportunity to be as healthy as possible.

HB 915 establishes a task force to study underrepresentation of Black, Latino and other minorities as practicing mental health professionals. The task force includes hospitals, community mental health providers, and representation from the state's historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Including Maryland's HBCUs acknowledges the role these institutions play in creating a pipeline of mental health practitioners.

Racism is a public health crisis. Inequities in health care access and quality and outcomes of care harm the health of our whole community. Last year, Maryland hospitals supported legislation to require implicit bias training for maternal health care providers. This year, MHA joined Vice Chair Joseline Peña-Melnyk in supporting House Bill 28, which engages health care professionals by requiring those licensed by a health occupations board to complete implicit bias training to renew their license or certificate. Increasing implicit bias training is a good step, but HB 915 would inform the state's efforts to expand opportunities for all Marylanders to join the health care profession and create a workforce that reflects the Maryland population.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report on HB 915.

For more information, please contact:
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