



Maryland
Hospital Association

March 3, 2021

To: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 796 - Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities and Maryland Health Care Commission - Reporting Requirements

Dear Chair Kelley:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 796. The legislation would ensure access to better race and ethnicity data for our health care workforce by expanding the required data reporting beyond just physicians. Under SB 796 data for all licensees would be submitted to the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (OMHHD).

Meaningful public policy that improves health equity and builds a diverse health care workforce requires access to robust, accurate, and Maryland-specific data. Past efforts to improve data collection for health outcomes, quality, and patient satisfaction by race were not coordinated or sustainable. SB 796 rectifies this misalignment and empowers OMHHD to carry out its mission.

In the past, the focus has been to gather data to improve outcomes for patients. Less work has been done to track the racial and ethnic makeup of our health care workforce. Building a workforce that reflects the communities hospitals serve is critical to improve the health and wellbeing of all Marylanders. SB 796 requires all health occupations boards to include an optional question on new license applications and renewals and requires the boards to encourage licensees to provide this information. This data can guide programs to increase the diversity of our health care heroes.

COVID-19 makes it impossible to deny or ignore historic health disparities. OMHHD needs to have all available data to ensure the right targeted programs and policies are in place to advance the health of all Marylanders.

For more information, please contact:
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