



Testimony on HB 915 Workgroup on Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander, and Other Underrepresented Behavioral Health Professionals

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Support

April 6, 2021

Chair Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

The National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) urges you to support HB 915, which establishes the Workgroup on Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander, and Other Underrepresented Behavioral Health Professionals; provides for the composition; requires the Workgroup to study and make recommendations regarding certain behavioral health professionals and certain students in the State who are Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander, or otherwise underrepresented in the behavioral health profession; and requires the Workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.

NASW is the largest national organization of social workers representing over 120,000 social workers and over 16,000 of those are licensed here in the state of Maryland. The social work profession provides a large proportion of the behavioral health services in Maryland and is also one of the most diverse of the provider professions. We are pleased that there are social work programs at each of the HBCUs in Maryland. Nevertheless, we are well aware that much more needs to be done to make sure that underrepresented groups have access to professional education and licensing so that our profession can become even more diverse and the populace which needs our services can find providers who are more attuned to their needs and life experiences. Many clients understandably prefer to receive services from those who look like them.

When delineating the composition of the Workgroup, we note that this bill calls for both three representatives from the behavioral health profession in the State and three individuals who provide social services in the State. Since social workers make up such a large proportion of the behavioral health providers and those who provide social services in Maryland, we hope that NASW-MD will be called upon for input in the composition of this workgroup. We stand ready to provide some excellent candidates for the governor's consideration.

We urge you to vote in favor of HB 915

Sincerely,

Daphne McClellan, PhD, MSW
Executive Director NASW-MD
Dmcclellan.naswmd@socialworkers.org

5750 Executive Drive, Suite 100, Baltimore, MD 21228
(410) 788-1066 · FAX (410) 747-0635 · nasw.md@verizon.net · www.nasw-md.org