



**SB 796 - Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities and
Maryland Health Care Commission – Reporting Requirements**

Position: Support

Bill Summary

SB 796 requires the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to collaborate with the Maryland Health Care Commission to publish a report card to include the racial and ethnic composition of all individuals who hold a license or certificate issued by a health occupations board.

Bill Rationale

MedStar Health is committed to advocating on behalf of patients for a better health care system and on behalf of all members of the care team to help them provide the best care possible. MedStar Health acknowledges that racial inequities create impediments to reaching those ends. Evaluating the performance of all members of the health care team and releasing the information to the public is an attempt to help consumers make better choices.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the nation’s health-professions workforce does not nearly reflect the diversity of the nation. Racial and ethnic minorities are woefully underrepresented in the health professions. In the 2000 U.S. Census, African Americans accounted for nearly 12.7 percent and Hispanics accounted for nearly 12.6 percent of the U.S. population. This diversity is not reflected in the health-professions workforce. As the following table¹ shows, African Americans and Hispanics are underrepresented in both the nation’s health professions and among those currently training to work in the health professions.

	Percentage of Health Professionals in the 2000 U.S. Census		Percentage of Students Enrolled in the Health Professions Training in 2003-2004	
	African American	Hispanic	African American	Hispanic
Dentistry	3.3	3.6	5.4	5.9
Medicine	4.4	5.1	7.4	6.4
Optometry	1.6	2.7	3.2	5.6
Pharmacy	5.1	3.2	9.3	9.5
Physician Assistants	8.4	8.1	6.8	6.5
Podiatry	4.6	1.7	14.0	7.7

¹ 2000 U.S. Census

We believe SB 796 will pave the way for consumers to have access to information that is meaningful, accurate, reliable, and relevant to their unique healthcare circumstances, so they feel empowered to make informed choices about their care.

For these reasons, we ask that you give SB 796 a **favorable** report.