



"Being here for Maryland's Children, Youth, and Families"

Testimony submitted to House Health and Government Operations Committee

March 23, 2021

**Senate Bill 52 – Maryland Commission on Health Equity
The Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021**

Support

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus (MAYSB) represents a network of YSBs throughout the state that provides mental health services and other supports for young people and their families. MAYSB supports *Senate Bill 52 – Maryland Commission on Health Equity - The Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021*. This bill is an important component of a legislative package to advance health equity in Maryland.

We are supportive of these efforts because of the overwhelming evidence that inequities continue to exist for Maryland minority populations in multiple areas. These areas are diverse and compelling: disparate health outcomes for diseases that are leading causes of death, inequities in access to prenatal care, disparities in the infant mortality rate, and different mental health outcomes and access to mental health care. It is of key importance that access to health resources is provided to all Marylanders, and that providers receive the training and information that is necessary to enable that access. Therefore, we support the legislative package that includes:

- **Senate Bill 52 – Maryland Commission on Health Equity (The Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021):** This bill establishes a commission to ensure State agencies develop policies through a health equity lens. This approach will enhance the State's efforts in addressing social determinants of health including food security, affordable housing, and accessible transportation;
- **Senate Bill 5 – Implicit Bias Training and the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity:** The bill requires all licensed health care practitioners to complete implicit bias training upon their next licensure renewal cycle. The timeline conveys the urgency of the addressing implicit bias within the health care system. The bill also ensures that there is sufficient funding for the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities; and
- **Senate Bill 565 – Public Health – Data – Race and Ethnicity Information:** This bill enhances capacity of the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to collect and disseminate data relevant to evaluate and guide policy decisions to address health inequities.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. We urge a favorable vote.

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