



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 28

### Public Health—Implicit Bias Training and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities

*Health and Government Operations Committee*

January 26, 2021

*Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Julia Gross, Co-Chairs*

#### **Member Agencies:**

Advocates for Children and Youth  
Baltimore Jewish Council  
Behavioral Health System Baltimore  
CASH Campaign of Maryland  
Catholic Charities  
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland  
Family League of Baltimore  
Fuel Fund of Maryland  
Health Care for the Homeless  
Homeless Persons  
Representation Project  
Job Opportunities Task Force  
League of Women Voters of Maryland  
Loyola University Maryland  
Maryland Catholic Conference  
Maryland Center on Economic Policy  
Maryland Community Action  
Partnership  
Maryland Family Network  
Maryland Hunger Solutions  
Paul's Place  
Public Justice Center  
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore  
Welfare Advocates

#### **Marylanders Against Poverty**

Stacey Jefferson, Co-Chair  
P: 410-637-1900 ext 8578  
C: 443-813-9231

E: [stacey.jefferson@bhsbaltimore.org](mailto:stacey.jefferson@bhsbaltimore.org)

Julia Gross, Co-Chair  
P: 410-528-0021x6029

E: [jgross@mdhungersolutions.org](mailto:jgross@mdhungersolutions.org)

**Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports HB 28.** There are significant racial disparities in birth outcomes for Black women and Black babies. Black women in Maryland are 4 times more likely to die after childbirth than White women. According to the State's Maternal Mortality Review Program, "compared to 2008- 2012, the 2013-2017 White MMR in Maryland decreased 35.4 percent and the Black MMR increased 11.9 percent, increasing the racial difference. The 2013-2017 Black MMR is 4 times the White MMR."<sup>1</sup>

The racial disparities in birth outcomes for Black individuals **cannot** be explained by biological differences, socio-economic status, or even education level. Rather, Black patients are treated differently by medical providers than White patients. We know it is critical that medical providers serving pregnant individuals receive training on implicit bias to reduce this bias and eliminate the racial disparities in birth outcomes for Black pregnant individuals and their babies. HB 28 expands upon HB 837 which passed in the 2020 Legislative Session and requires implicit bias training for all health care practitioners and to see that training become a requirement for the recertification of their medical license. While we recognize that training on implicit bias alone is not enough to eliminate bias by medical providers and eliminating racial bias by medical providers alone will not eliminate racial disparities in health outcomes, we applaud the steps forward HB 28 takes towards that goal.

The only way to eliminate racial disparities in health outcomes is to collect health data that is disaggregated by race and ethnicity and study the root causes of those disparities. We applaud HB 28's requirement that Maryland's Department of Health publish and update bi-annually health data disaggregated by race and ethnicity on their Health Equity Data page. Finally, HB 28's inclusion of a budget appropriation and the requirement to seek additional funding ensures that the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities has the resources it needs to robustly address racial disparities in health outcomes across Maryland.

**MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 28 so we can more effectively eliminate racial disparities in health outcomes.**

*Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.*

<sup>1</sup> "Maryland Maternal Mortality Review 2019 Annual Report," Health –General Article § 13-207 at p. 6.  
[https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/mch/Documents/MMR/MMR\\_2019\\_AnnualReport.pdf](https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/mch/Documents/MMR/MMR_2019_AnnualReport.pdf)