

Maryland General Assembly Selected Minority Health Legislation 2000 - 2009

House Bill 756 (2009) establishes a Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Provider Competency Program, which encourages health professional associations in Maryland to identify or develop training programs for health care providers in cultural competency, sensitivity, and health literacy. The Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (MHHD) will assist the professional societies by providing information about existing training programs and technical assistance to societies that wish to develop their own programs. [*Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, et al*]

House Bill 942 (2008) required universities, colleges, and higher education programs of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and dentistry in Maryland to report to three General Assembly committees and MHHD on their courses that address cultural competency, sensitivity, and health literacy. MHHD worked with the programs to develop a reporting format. As of May 1, 2009, a majority of the 14 programs have submitted reports. MHHD is currently reviewing and evaluating the final reports. [*Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam*]

House Bill 905/Senate Bill 438 (2008) requires institutions of higher education to report annually to their respective governing bodies and Maryland Independent Colleges and Universities Association (MICUA) on programs that promote and enhance cultural diversity. MICUA and the governing bodies must report to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), which must present a final report to four committees of the General Assembly. MHHD will provide technical assistance to the institutions, MHEC, and MICUA in the preparation of reports to the General Assembly. [*Delegate Ana Sol Gutierrez, et al and Senator Verna Jones, et al*]

Senate Bill 269 (2007) authorized insurers, non-profit health service plans, and Health Management Organizations (HMO) to collect racial and ethnic data for the evaluation of quality of care outcomes and performance measurements, but prohibits them from using the data to deny or adjust coverage. MHHD will provide support and assistance to insurers on the collection of this racial and ethnic data. [*Senator Joan Carter Conway, et al*]

House Bill 793 (2007) established a steering committee on services for adults with sickle cell disease. The steering committee is charged with establishing institution and community partnerships, creating a statewide network of stakeholders who care for individuals with sickle cell disease, educating individuals about sickle cell disease, and assisting in seeking grant funding for treatment services. MHHD staff members serve on this committee and provide technical assistance. [*Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, et al*]

Senate Bill 283 (2007) established a Cancer Pilot Program in Charles County to fund prostate cancer screening and treatment services, and provide prostate cancer education. MHHD will be involved in the implementation and evaluation of this pilot program. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) will present a final report to the General Assembly in 2010, describing screening and treatment outcomes, and any cost savings achieved in Charles County as a result of the early detection of prostate cancer. [*Senators Thomas Middleton, Roy Dyson, and Richard Colburn*]

House Bill 1455 (2006) required DHMH, through MHHD, to provide technical assistance to community based entities for a specified pilot program in community hospitals that addresses the cultural competency training of health care providers using specified health outcomes. The health indices are to be tracked and contrasted with the cultural competency level of health care providers who provided the services. [*Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, et al*]

House Bill 58 (2006) required the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) to collect racial and ethnic data and prepare annual reports, in collaboration with MHHD, on 1) racial and ethnic disparities in insurance coverage for low-income, non-elderly individuals and 2) disparities in morbidity and mortality rates for cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality, asthma and other diseases. MHHD is working with MHCC to collect this data and prepare a report. [*Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, et al*]

House Bill 86/Senate Bill 177 (2004) established MHHD within DHMH's Office of the Secretary for the improvement of minority health care by working with other public and private entities to establish forums, programs, and initiatives designed to educate the public regarding minority health and health disparities issues. [*Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, et al and Senator Nathaniel Exum, et al*]

House Bill 883 (2003) required DHMH to develop and implement a plan to reduce health care disparities. MHHD completed the *Maryland Plan to Eliminate Minority Health Disparities* in December 2006. MHHD is currently engaged in a variety of activities to implement the Plan, including expanding its Clearinghouse, working with colleges and universities on cultural competency training, and assisting DHMH programs with their plans to reduce health disparities. [*Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, et al*]

Senate Bill 896/House Bill 1425 (2000) established the Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Program and the Cancer Prevention, Education, Screening, and Treatment Program within DHMH, and provided annual funding for these programs from the Cigarette Restitution Fund. The purpose of these programs is to implement public health initiatives that reduce tobacco use and reduce mortality and morbidity rates for cancer and tobacco-related diseases in Maryland. [*Senator Chris Van Hollen, et al and Delegate Howard "Pete" Rawlings, et al*]