



DIVERSIFYING THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE: IMPLICATIONS FOR BIRTH OUTCOMES

The benefits of having a diverse maternal and child health workforce are far-reaching. But achieving a healthcare workforce that meets the needs of an increasingly diverse patient population and reflects the racial and ethnic diversity across Michigan remains aspirational.

In our state, mandates and policies have focused on reducing health disparities by incorporating implicit bias training for existing providers. This is a strong step forward toward building a more inclusive workforce, but more must be done to directly contribute to bringing diverse individuals into the maternal and child healthcare workforce.

Policy considerations for diversifying professionals who serve pregnant individuals and children:

- Incorporate measures of workforce diversity into system performance metrics, such as hospital community needs assessments.
- Increase and enhance educational loan repayment programs by examining barriers to participation by underrepresented populations; change funding amounts and rules to increase utilization by professionals engaged in maternal and infant care.
- Payers of health care, primarily insurers, can provide incentive payments to provider organizations that demonstrate workforce diversity, as well as concordance with patient population.
- Funding for scholarships or programming of early pipelines, like middle school STEM programs, along with support for involvement of diverse instructors that can serve as role models.
- Academic institutions must utilize holistic admissions and not rely on grade point averages and standardized test scores built on historic inequities and racism.
- Provide stipends and commensurate workload adjustments for mentors of students or new professionals in both the educational and work settings to allow meaningful engagement. Pair experts in social supports with mentors to assure that barriers to retention can be supported and addressed.
- Establish and incentivize work opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to create earning opportunities and place emphasis on the value of practical and clinical experience.
- Advocate for federal MOMNIBUS legislation, that includes HR 945 and S 287 requiring federal investments to grow and diversify the perinatal workforce and ensure culturally congruent maternity care and support.



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