



*MDDCSAM is the Maryland state chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine whose members are physicians and other health providers who treat people with substance use disorders.*

Senate Bill 518: Career Pathways for Health Care Workers Program

Senate Finance Committee February 24, 2022

## **SUPPORT**

According to the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)'s 2021 Public Policy Statement *Advancing Racial Justice in Addiction Medicine*<sup>1</sup>, "**Addiction medicine professionals should advocate for policies that lead to a more diverse addiction treatment workforce and should seek opportunities to mentor BIPOC clinicians into the field. Robust funding should be made available and targeted for scholarships and loan repayment for BIPOC addiction medicine professionals.**"

Therefore, the Maryland-DC chapter of ASAM enthusiastically endorses HB 821, which aims to expand and diversify the health care workforce by providing matching grants to employers to fund training programs to be offered through Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and community colleges.

Diversifying Maryland's mental health workforce is an important step, among many others, in reducing healthcare disparities. Approximately 4% of U.S. psychologists, and approximately 2% of psychiatrists are Black. Given the imperative to cultivate a diverse and highly skilled health care workforce to meet the needs of our population, we strongly urge a favorable report.

Respectfully,

Natalie Spicyn, MD, MHS  
Member, Public Policy Committee

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<sup>1</sup> Advancing Racial Justice in Addiction Medicine. Feb 2021 <https://www.asam.org/advocacy/public-policy-statements/details/public-policy-statements/2021/08/09/public-policy-statement-on-advancing-racial-justice-in-addiction-medicine>