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Governor Gretchen Whitmer and LARA Announce Adopted Training Requirement to Improve Equity Across Michigan's Health Care System

LANSING, Mich. —Today, Governor Gretchen Whitmer and the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) took an important step to address health care disparities and improve equity in the delivery of healthcare to all Michigan residents. LARA has adopted new administrative rules that require implicit bias training as part of the knowledge and skills necessary for the licensure or registration of health care professionals in Michigan.

Michigan is a national leader in recognizing and addressing disparities that affect the equitable provision of health care. Last year, upon recommendation by the Michigan Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities, Governor Whitmer issued Executive Directive 2020-07 which directed LARA to begin promulgating rules that incorporated an implicit bias training requirement. Today's announcement caps nearly 11 months of collaboration and engagement with licensees, insurance providers, hospitals, health care associations, legislators, state agencies, higher education, and community and advocacy groups.

"Today's new training guidelines will help us mitigate the impacts of implicit bias and ensure every patient in Michigan receives the best possible care," said **Governor Gretchen Whitmer**. "These rules will save lives and improve health outcomes for generations of Michiganders, especially those who have been historically and systemically discriminated against. They will make Michigan safer, healthier, and more just."

"Implicit, unconscious bias exists within each of us, and as public servants we have a duty to understand and address how our biases can impact the lives of others," said **Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist**. "The health disparities highlighted during the pandemic made it clear that there is more work to do to ensure that bias does not prevent people of color from experiencing the same access to quality, equitable of health care as everyone else. Today's

new rules, which were a key recommendation of the Michigan Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities, are additional building blocks that will help us create a culture of responsive inclusion that will make state government and the practice of medical professions in Michigan a national model for equality, understanding, and fairness. I sincerely thank the task force members, partners, and supporters for their work on this important effort.”

New applicants for licensure or registration will need to complete a minimum of 2 hours of training, and applicants for renewal will need to complete a minimum of 1 hour of training each year. The annual training curriculum can cover a variety of topics related to implicit bias but must incorporate strategies to reduce disparities including the administration of self-assessments.

“LARA is proud to support our health care professionals in delivering the highest quality of care to all patients,” said **LARA Director Orlene Hawks**. “While technical knowledge and clinical skills should always be held to a high standard, it is equally important that health professionals understand the ways in which they view and interact with the communities they serve. As a result of this new training requirement, we anticipate improvements in the delivery of care, stronger relationships with communities, and ultimately better health outcomes.”

Michigan currently licenses over 400,000 health care professionals. The new rules, signed by LARA Director Orlene Hawks, require that health care professionals receive annual training to recognize and mitigate implicit bias. These rules aim to reduce disparities and improve equity in the delivery of health care to Michigan residents through practical education of new and renewing licensed health care professionals.

“As a member of the Racial Disparities Task Force, I am proud to see Governor Whitmer and the state of Michigan adopt our implicit bias recommendation,” said **Renee Canady, CEO of Michigan Public Health Institute**. “Thanks to LARA’s swift action and implementation, health care professionals will now be trained to recognize and correct their own biases towards the Michiganders they serve. This new rule is a huge first step in our work to create a health care system that equitably serves everyone in our state.”

“Ensuring health care workers receive implicit bias training is a major, positive step toward improving health outcomes for Black and Brown Michiganders,” said **Democratic Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, Rep. Kyra Harris Bolden**. “I’m grateful to have worked with Governor Whitmer on this important policy priority for the past year, during the coronavirus pandemic, which has laid bare the disparities in health outcomes facing communities of color.”

The new requirement will be effective June 1, 2022, which will allow training sponsors time to develop courses and applicants an opportunity to take training prior to their next renewal date. Implicit bias training may be sponsored by a nationally or state recognized health-

related organization, an accredited college or university, a state or federal agency, a continuing education program approved by a state licensing board, or an organization specializing in diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. Several health care providers already offer implicit bias training and various health associations are currently developing training for their members.

The new requirements are included in sections [R 338.7001 - 338.7005](#) of the Public Health Code – General Rules.