



Date: April 22, 2021

ATTN: Senator Virginia Lyons, Chair, Health and Welfare Committee

RE: VPQHC Comments – H.210 - *An act relating to addressing disparities and promoting equity in the health care system*

Dear Senator Lyons and Members of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee:

The Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc. (VPQHC) submits this testimony requesting the Committee's consideration related to the following section in draft bill H.210 - *An act relating to addressing disparities and promoting equity in the health care system*:

Section 252 (D) (6)

VPQHC would like to ensure consistent funding is provided to support efforts to improve the equitable delivery of care across the continuum of health care services in Vermont.

Most immediately, in partnership with Dr. Maria Mercedes Avila, VPQHC began offering a baseline health equity training series for health care providers and professionals called *Structural Competence and Cultural Humility to Address Disparities and Inequities*. In January of 2021 VPQHC received funding to coordinate three of the baseline trainings for health care providers (including mental health providers). Within just a few weeks of posting the trainings on our website all training dates had filled beyond capacity and our waitlist grew to over 80 interested participants. VPQHC was able to secure funding to coordinate an additional eight baseline trainings but we anticipate these trainings will fill quickly as well.

To date, two of the baseline trainings have been completed. The training series has received excellent feedback from participants. With all participants indicating that as a result of the training they are able to "demonstrate increased self-awareness of racial, ethnic and class biases." Additionally, all participants reported that as a result of their participation in the training they will be "able to incorporate structural competence and cultural humility into the services" they provide.

VPQHC is looking to expand this training series to meet demand, and offer at no cost to the participant, an additional series of baseline and advanced health equity trainings over the course of one year. We are anxious to identify additional funding as soon as possible, as there is willingness and readiness among the community of healthcare providers and professionals to start this journey now.

VPQHC believes that equitable health care is quality health care. Equity is included as one of the six domains for quality as defined by the Institute of Medicine from its quality chasm series¹, as outlined in the table below. VPQHC appreciates the committee's attention and dedication to advancing this essential and much-needed work in Vermont.



Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc.

Aim	Description
1. Safe care	Avoiding injuries to patients
2. Effective care	Providing care based on scientific knowledge
3. Patient-centered care	Providing respectful and responsive care that ensures that patient values guide clinical decisions
4. Timely care	Reducing waits for both recipients and providers of care
5. Efficient care	Avoiding waste
6. Equitable care	Ensuring that the quality of care does not vary because of characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location.

Thank you.

Catherine E. Fulton, BS, MS,
CPHQ Executive Director
Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc.