

**Proponent Testimony
Presented by: Manju Sankarappa**

**Senate Bill 33, Health and Human Services Committee September 30, 2015
Senator Shannon Jones, Chair**

Chairwoman Jones, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee;
My name is Manju Sankarappa, Executive Director of Ohio Asian American Health Coalition (OAAHC) and Member of Great Lakes Region V Regional Health Equity Council. OAAHC is a State-wide organization with Community Based Organization offices located representing Akron, Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Dayton and Toledo Asian population. I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to testify at this Senate Bill 33.

The senate bill addresses very important aspect of healthcare delivery system. Healthcare profession is very important thread and integral part of delivering appropriate care to each and individual, we believe Cultural Competency should be part of the training beginning with medical school or any other related training schools that certify or recertify healthcare professions across all lines.

It is my understanding Senate Bill 33 requires healthcare professionals to complete cultural competency training in order to receive or renew their license, certification or registration by the appropriate state board. Healthcare professionals will have to submit evidence to the board which they report to demonstrating that they have completed training in cultural competence according to the standards set by their respective boards.

In my testimony, I would like this certification to be part of training for all the Healthcare professionals at all levels. I consider Healthcare professional as every person that comes in contact with individuals that is receiving the treatment, ~~to include~~

As State of Ohio is continuing to grow with increased diverse population from all over the world, it becomes our responsibility to provide culturally competent care. Human behavior that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. Competency in serving diverse cultures implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization with regards to the cultural beliefs, behaviors and needs presented by consumers and their communities.

Cultural Competency has become recognized as an integral component of healthcare because of its relevance in treating patients and eliminating health disparities among racial, ethnic and cultural communities. It is critical that patients and healthcare providers are able to effectively communicate with one another in order for the best care to be provided. Not understanding cultural differences leads to actions that may not be intended creating mistrust, miscommunication and misunderstanding that can lead results unintended.

One example of health disparities among racial and ethnic minority populations include Liver cancer as a result of Hepatitis B virus. Foreign born Asian and African population are high-risk for HepB virus. Risk of Asian and African population not screened or treated for HepB virus can lead to Cirrhosis or even Liver cancer. The cancer incidence rate among African Americans is 10 percent higher than among whites. Similarly Cardiovascular Diseases and Diabetes are very high in Asian population.

Healthcare providers need to be equipped with the skills to serve the state's diverse populations which are continuing to increase. In Ohio racial and ethnic minorities represent about 16% of the population. Asian population in Ohio represents 265,000 i.e. from 1.9% to 2.3 %, compared to Hispanic population in Ohio grew now accounts for 3.1 % of the state's total population. Most recent immigrant population of Nepali/Bhutanese is estimated at in Central Ohio alone is somewhere from 12,500 – 25,000. Furthermore, with more than 60 languages spoken in Ohio it is increasingly important to be culturally and linguistically competent in order to better serve our state's residents.

In order to achieve health equity we must eliminate barriers that prevent individuals from receiving quality care. Requiring cultural competency training is an opportunity to assist healthcare providers in gaining the knowledge needed to successfully serve patients from all backgrounds and eliminate health disparities among all Ohioans.

Manju Sankarappa, Executive Director

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Note: Columbus is ranked 8th highest for High Risk Asian and African populations.