



Bethesda Inc.

**Senate Concurrent Resolution 14 – Proponent Testimony
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee**

Jill Miller

President, Bethesda Inc.

June 22, 2020

Dear Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Ohio Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee:

My name is Jill Miller, President of Bethesda Inc., which is founder of bi3, a dedicated grantmaking initiative to transform health in Greater Cincinnati, and co-sponsor of TriHealth, the leading integrated healthcare delivery system in Southwest Ohio. Since 2010, bi3 has invested more than \$48 million in innovative ideas to transform health and healthcare, ranking it as one of Ohio's largest health-focused funders. I am writing in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 14 (SCR 14), which would declare racism a public health crisis and ask Governor DeWine to establish a working group to promote racial equity in Ohio.

Ohio needs to confront systemic racism and its devastating impact on the health of minority citizens in our state NOW. Systemic racism is not new. We know residents in neighborhoods with a high percentage of African American and Latino residents are significantly more likely to develop conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity, and less likely to have ready access to quality healthcare. Nationally, African Americans are 60 percent more likely to die from a stroke than whites, and babies of color are dying at 2.5 times the rate of white babies. This year's COVID-19 pandemic statistics, along with recent, highly publicized and tragic deaths born from racism, are more evidence that simply being a person of color in our nation puts you at greater risk for illness, disease, and death. It is an unacceptable and preventable public health crisis that is our collective responsibility to change TODAY.

As we grapple with these injustices, it is time to stop accepting the status quo and start looking for solutions to tackle these inequalities at their roots. Bethesda Inc. is committed through its own initiatives to ending long-standing structural racism that results in these health disparities. We are prioritizing issues to remove social determinants of health while supporting new care-models that look at a whole person and respect the culture and barriers they face every day. Passing SCR 14 would accelerate Ohio's ability and effectiveness in doing so.

Bethesda Inc. and its entities fully support SCR 14 and applaud Senator Sandra Williams and Senator Hearcel Craig for their efforts to introduce this legislation, making Ohio the first state in the nation to address racism as a public health crisis. The inherent biases SCR 14 addresses were not an accident but built generations ago. A racist system hurting the health of our citizens today. Through this legislation, together, we will begin to create the sustainable change needed for better care and better health for EVERYONE in Ohio.

Sincerely,

Jill Miller

President, Bethesda Inc.