



Corporate Office

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June 30, 2021

TO: The Honorable Representative Jay Edwards, Chair, House Economic and Workforce Development Committee
The Honorable Representative Jena Powell, Vice Chair, House Economic and Workforce Development Committee
The Honorable Representative Terrence Upchurch, Ranking Member, House Economic and Workforce Development Committee

As the largest employer and healthcare provider of the greater Akron region, we are excited to provide support to Senators' Sykes and Schuring S.B. 105 legislation, the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) certification reciprocity. Summa Health is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion both across our organization and within the communities we serve. Removing barriers to MBE certification is a critical step towards providing minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses equal access to compete for economic opportunities.

Minority, women, and veteran owned enterprises face significant hurdles to entrepreneurship, including limited resources and access that affect their ability to compete for public contracts. The COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately impacted minority communities, has only exacerbated the challenges facing these businesses. For example, the National Bureau of Economic Research reported that more than 40% of U.S. Black-owned businesses closed in 2020 due to the pandemic. The current certification system requiring these businesses to apply for and maintain multiple certifications and processes is burdensome, time-consuming, and disincentivizes participation in local business opportunities.

At Summa Health we are dedicated to improving the health and economic well-being of our community and eliminating disparities among its members. A streamlined, reciprocal certification process would make it easier and more efficient for minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses to operate and flourish. Reducing the administrative burden on these mostly small businesses would further expand access and opportunities to these underrepresented groups and encourage more diversity in a broader range of industries that operate within public and private sectors.

We strive to create and sustain an environment that actively embraces diversity and inclusion among our patients, employees, and our business and community partners. A critical component towards achieving this environment is supporting and enabling opportunities for these diverse partners to thrive. Summa Health is proud to support this much needed legislation which has the potential to grow businesses and earnings not only for minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses, but also for Ohio. We thank our public leadership for considering this timely legislation and urge for its prompt passage.

I thank you in advance for considering our request.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'CLIFF DEVENY'.

Cliff Deveny, M.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Summa Health