

**Memorandum in Support - A5679-A (Assemblymember Darling)/S2987-A (Senator Parker)**

American Nurses Association - New York (ANA-NY), on behalf of its members and their patients, **supports** the passage of A5679-A (Darling)/S2987-A (Parker), which establish a racial equity working group to address issues related to racism as a public health crisis.

American Nurses Association-New York (ANA-NY) is a professional nursing organization representing the interests of New York State's 260,000 registered nurses. ANA-NY advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing care, supporting the professional and educational advancement of nurses, and promoting the welfare of nurses to the end that all people may have better health care.

In January of this year, our national organization, American Nurses Association (ANA), announced the launch of the National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing, which is a coalition of leading nursing organizations. The Commission will examine the issue of racism within nursing nationwide and describe the impact on nurses, patients, communities, and health care systems to confront systemic racism. ANA-NY is also part of this coalition, and we applaud this effort at the state level to look at issues related to racism as a public health crisis.

ANA-NY believes that racism is a public health crisis that impacts a person's mental, spiritual, and physical health as well as overall quality of life. We know that racism exists in the profession and also with respect to patient care and access to health services. We know that there is racism in the nursing profession and that nurses of color are often subjected to unfair structural and systemic workplace practices that must be identified, addressed and eradicated.

The goal of the Commission is to lead a national discussion to address racism in nursing to create safe and liberating environments as well as an antiracist profession for all nurses. We believe this legislation is necessary to go beyond the work of the Commission and that a discussion at the state level is needed to addressing racism not only in the nursing profession but in all of the healthcare professions and in the care and treatment afforded our patients. Racism cannot be combatted if we do not understand and own the negative impacts of and seek to change racism in public health.

There are a number of studies that show the impact of race on health disparities. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted these disparities as the pandemic disproportionately impacted people of color. We believe that a study to look at the issue of racism and its effect on healthcare will help to focus on a topic that is past due for attention.

For the above reasons, ANA-NY **strongly supports** the passage of A5679-A (Darling)/S2987-A (Parker) related to creating a racial equity working group to address issues related to racism as a public health crisis.