



## Increasing BIPOC Mental Health Equity

### ISSUE:

The COVID-19 pandemic and continuing racial injustices have exposed long-standing and deeply rooted physical and mental health treatment disparities among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Although percentage prevalence rates for mental health disorders are relatively equal across racial and ethnic groups, **BIPOC minority populations are less likely than other Americans to receive mental health treatment due to a lack of access to services and cultural stigma.**

### BACKGROUND:

Children and families from culturally diverse groups have unique needs that are not always met by our current health care system. This is especially true for BIPOC individuals and communities. They may have more difficulty finding mental health professionals, particularly child and adolescent psychiatrists, who are in very short supply nationally, especially in minority communities.

Culturally aware mental health professionals are needed to help children and adolescents navigate often very different external cultures to their own family and help them address these sources of stress.

Families may also want to see a mental health professional who has a similar background or who knows about their culture, but finding such care can be daunting as well.

We currently lack reliable data to help guide government-supported mental health spending to states to address these issues.

### SOLUTION:

One promising approach, H.R. 1331, the *“Strengthening Mental Health Supports for BIPOC Communities Act,”* would require state Community Mental Health Services Block Grants to report information to SAMHSA on:

- (1) services inequities within BIPOC communities and outcomes experienced
- (2) outreach to and hiring of BIPOC mental health professionals, and
- (3) training on culturally and linguistically responsive services

### CONGRESSIONAL ASKS:

- Please co-sponsor, support, and advance H.R. 1331, the *“Strengthening Mental Health Supports for BIPOC Communities Act,”* sponsored by Rep. Cardenas (D-CA)

- Seek sponsorship and introduction of a Senate companion bill, S. \_\_\_\_

