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**Pennsylvania General Assembly**  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

***Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus***

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** All Members of the House of Representatives

**From:** Representative Ronald G. Waters

**Date:** December 30, 2010

**Subject:** Co-sponsorship of Legislation Requiring Continuing Education in Cultural Competency for Health Care Providers

In the near future, I plan to re-introduce legislation requiring each health care professional licensure board to establish a minimum number of hours of mandatory continuing education in cultural competency and patient centered care that must be completed during each licensure period.

Disparities within the health care system, meaning population specific differences in the presence of disease, health outcomes and the quality of care, account for unnecessary health care costs. According to a recent report by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, eliminating health disparities could reduce state and federal direct care expenditures by more than \$200 billion.

Cultural competency is demonstrated in the way patients and health care professionals are able to talk about health concerns without cultural differences interfering with the conversation. An example of these differences in patient and provider cultures can be seen in patient education materials, including informed consent forms, hospital discharge documents and directions for patient self-care which are written at grade fourteen reading level while the average patient reads at seventh grade level.

Under my legislation, physicians, dentists, registered and practical nurses, optometrists, pharmacists, psychologists, social workers and professional counselors will be required to complete a minimum number of hours of continuing medical education on cultural competency to be specified by their licensing boards. The licensure boards will be required to review and approve continuing medical education providers and accrediting bodies who will be certified to offer the required continuing medical education credit hours.

If you would like to join me in co-sponsoring this important legislation, please contact Danielle Bowers at (717) 772-6955 or [dbowers@pahouse.net](mailto:dbowers@pahouse.net). Thank you.