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Health Professionals for Diversity Coalition (HPD)

a coalition of health care providers, researchers, educators, policy makers, students, and others dedicated to improving the health of all who live in this nation

To the Citizens of Michigan:

As Michigan health professionals and health educators, we are writing to express our strong support for creating a diverse health professions workforce. We believe that a diverse workforce is essential for securing access to quality care. Building a diverse health care workforce requires appropriate and effective mechanisms that expand opportunities for men and women from all backgrounds, income levels, and racial and ethnic groups.

Affirmative action is a key mechanism for providing these opportunities. However, the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative (Proposal 2), if passed, would change Michigan's constitution by putting an end to affirmative action in the state. This would not be good for Michigan's health, and here is why:

1. **Gaps in health care quality and access exist** across the nation, particularly for low-income families and racial and ethnic minorities. These stark realities are experienced by Michigan's citizens.
2. **A diverse nation requires a diverse health care workforce** that is trained to be responsive to the ever-changing needs of our society.
3. **Similar initiatives in other states have adversely affected diversity efforts.** California and Washington states witnessed a significant decline in minority enrollments in higher education, including medical and dental schools, after passage of anti-affirmative action ballots. This has now raised serious concerns about enhancing diversity at the University of California system and Washington's Higher Education Coordinating Board.

For these reasons, we believe that diversity-building tools, such as affirmative action, help ensure that qualified individuals from all backgrounds have the opportunity to serve the health care needs of Michigan's citizens.

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