



Do No Harm

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April 21, 2026

VIA *ELECTRONIC MAIL*: OCRComplaint@hhs.gov

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Civil Rights
Hubert H. Humphrey Bldg.
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201-0004

Re: Complaint Under Title VI and the ACA Against Beacon Health System – Race Discrimination in Scholarship Program

To whom this may concern:

Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Do No Harm files this complaint against Beacon Health System, Inc.—a nonprofit healthcare provider.¹ Beacon Health is unlawfully discriminating against white students and other disfavored races through its “Underrepresented in Medicine” Scholarship Program. As Beacon Health candidly admits, this opportunity is open only to members of select “racial/ethnic minority group[s].” Other races must look elsewhere.

That blatant discrimination is illegal. Racial discrimination is “invidious in all contexts.” *SFFA v. Harvard*, 600 U.S. 181, 214 (2023) (cleaned up). As a nonprofit healthcare system that takes federal funds, Beacon Health is subject to Title VI. And Title VI prohibits Beacon Health from “us[ing] race as a factor” in its activities, including in awarding scholarship funds to students. *Id.* at 204 (cleaned up). The ACA likewise makes doubly clear that health care privileges will not be handed out on the basis of race. “Simple justice requires that public funds, to which all taxpayers of all races contribute, not be spent in any fashion which encourages, entrenches, subsidizes, or results in racial discrimination.” *Barbour v. WMATA*, 374 F.3d 1161, 1170 (D.C. Cir. 2004). Illegal and discriminatory programs like Beacon Health’s

¹ Beacon Health System, Inc. is located at 615 N. Michigan St., South Bend, IN 46601. See Beacon Health, *Contact Beacon Health System*, perma.cc/MZ7Y-L49K (archived Apr. 10, 2026).

scholarship “not only violate the text and spirit of our longstanding federal civil-rights laws,” but “they also undermine our national unity, as they deny, discredit, and undermine the traditional American values of hard work, excellence, and individual achievement in favor of an unlawful, corrosive, and pernicious identity-based spoils system.” *Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunities*, Exec. Order 14173, §1 (Jan. 21, 2025).

This Office has the statutory duty to investigate and rectify violations of Title VI and the ACA by healthcare providers that accept federal funds. *See* 45 C.F.R. §§80.3, 80.7. Do No Harm respectfully requests that the Office open an investigation and remedy Beacon Health’s race discrimination.

I. Beacon Health’s Underrepresented in Medicine Scholarship Program discriminates on the basis of race.

Beacon Health System, Inc. describes itself as “[f]ostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion.” *See* Beacon Health, *About Us*, perma.cc/8HU5-6XVV (archived Apr. 10, 2026). As part of this mission, Beacon Health operates the Underrepresented in Medicine Scholarship. *See* Beacon Health, *Family Medicine Underrepresented in Medicine (URiM) Student Elective Scholarship Program*, perma.cc/TNQ2-2QGV (archived Mar. 26, 2026). This scholarship offers a student training rotation in family medicine and is an “exceptional” opportunity for certain fourth-year medical students. Winners get a chance to participate in both inpatient and outpatient residency rotations, a shot to interview for a full-time residency at Memorial Hospital after medical school, and “dedicated URiM physicians serving as mentors.” *Id.* They also collect generous \$1,500 stipends. *Id.* To be eligible, applicants must be in good standing at an accredited medical school in the United States and pass all their core clinical clerkships by the start of the rotation. *Id.*

This scholarship, however, is *not* equally “welcoming” to all fourth-year medical students and instead blatantly discriminates on the basis of race. Emphasizing “[t]he [i]mportance of [d]iversity,” Beacon Health explains that “[d]iversity, equity, and inclusion are core values of [its] health system and central to [its] mission as an organization.” *Id.* So Beacon Health made a “central mission” of its residency to “encourage medical students who are underrepresented in medicine (URiM) to rotate with [the] program.” *Id.* Accordingly, to be eligible for the scholarship, an applicant must belong to a group that Beacon Health considers “a traditionally underrepresented racial/ethnic minority group.” *Id.* And Beacon Health understands that to mean “African American or Black, Hispanic or Latinx, Native American or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander,” presuming also

that students of these racial minorities have all “faced significant socioeconomic disadvantage.” *Id.* In Beacon Health’s view, students of other races—their academic ability, diverse skills, experiences, and perspectives notwithstanding—would not sufficiently “improv[e] the quality of care for patients” or “the educational opportunities for all learners.” *Id.* But that racially discriminatory belief is not a lawful basis to deny scholarship opportunities to students.

II. Beacon Health’s race discrimination violates federal law.

Beacon Health’s race discrimination violates Title VI. Under Title VI, “[n]o person in the United States shall, on the ground of race ... be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” 42 U.S.C. §2000d.

Beacon Health System, Inc. is a nonprofit healthcare provider that benefits from substantial federal funding. *See* H. Prescott, *Beacon receives \$5.4 million grant to address maternal and infant health through cross-sector collaboration*, perma.cc/6NAU-QAKE (archived Mar. 26, 2026). Beacon Health is subject to Title VI because it receives federal funds and, at minimum, is an entity that is “principally engaged in the business of providing ... health care.” 42 U.S.C. §2000d-4a(3)(A)(ii). Its scholarship is a “program or activity” under Title VI because it is an “operatio[n]” of Beacon Health. 42 U.S.C. §2000d-4a. And Beacon Health has willfully caused and will continue to cause students of disfavored races to be “excluded from participation in,” “denied the benefits of,” and “subjected to discrimination under” the Underrepresented in Medicine Scholarship “on the ground of race, color, or national origin.” 42 U.S.C. §2000d.

Beacon Health’s discrimination is accomplished through illegal racial stereotyping about who is “diverse” and may “bring differing perspectives” and “lived experiences” to the clinical practice setting, and who has “faced significant socioeconomic disadvantage.” *See* Beacon Health, *Family Medicine Underrepresented in Medicine*, *supra*. But under Title VI, “the offensive and demeaning assumption that [students] of a particular race, because of their race, [are] alike” is not a permissible mechanism to decide which students deserve opportunities to compete for scholarships. *SFFA*, 600 U.S. at 220-21 (cleaned up). Beacon Health’s scholarship program thus violates Title VI.

Beacon Health’s discrimination also violates the Affordable Care Act. The ACA incorporates Title VI’s prohibition on racial discrimination and forbids race discrimination by “any health program or activity, any part of which is receiving

Federal financial assistance.” 42 U.S.C. §18116(a). Beacon Health’s conduct therefore runs afoul of the ACA for the same reasons it contravenes Title VI.

In sum, and despite the organization’s “commitment to ... building a respectful and supportive learning environment,” Beacon Health tells whites and other disfavored races that they are ineligible for the same scholarship opportunities offered to certain preferred races. That is illegal. *SFFA*, 600 U.S. at 214-20. This Office has a duty to investigate and remedy such Title VI and ACA violations, and it should consider referring the matter to the Department of Justice for further or concurrent action.

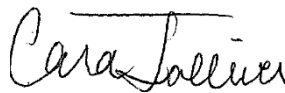
Conclusion

For all these reasons, Do No Harm requests that the Office for Civil Rights open an investigation into Beacon Health’s Underrepresented in Medicine Scholarship and find that its brazen race discrimination violates Title VI and the ACA.

Sincerely,



Kristina Rasmussen
Executive Director



Cara Tolliver
Vice President of Legal Programs