



**February 18, 2020**

**Written Testimony in Support of HB 1120:  
Health Care Providers and Health Benefit Plans - Discrimination in Provision of  
Services**

Delegate Pendergrass, Chair, Delegate Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

MoCo Pride Center - a 501c3 advocacy and outreach organization working to build, support, and advocate for a stronger and more diverse LGBTQ community in Montgomery County, MD - is proud to fully support HB1120, Health Care Providers and Health Benefit Plans - Discrimination in Provision of Services.

As you know, this bill would prohibit discrimination by hospitals, healthcare providers, and healthcare insurers in Maryland on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, and disability. These protections are essential for all people, but especially for the LGBTQ+ community.

Transgender people are, unsurprisingly, some of those most affected by healthcare discrimination. Doctors, hospitals, and insurance companies have frequently been cited as refusing to meet transgender patient's needs - whether it's by refusing insurance coverage of reproductive health care for transmasculine patients who need access to an OBGYN, insistence on using incorrect pronouns, or direct refusal of services based on religious objections to the existence of transgender identities. Many transgender Marylanders already have to travel unreasonable distances for access to the healthcare they need to facilitate their transitions and maintain their correct hormone levels. To leave legal leeway for these people to face even more obstacles to treatment is uncaring at best; cruel at worst.

It is imperative that healthcare non-discrimination be codified in Maryland to help protect our most vulnerable populations. The refusal of necessary medical treatment due to institutionally-sanctioned discrimination is a violation of the basic human rights of

Marylanders, and we owe it to our communities to ensure that they can seek the treatment that they need without fear of refusal on the basis of who they are.

**We urge this committee to file favorable report on HB 1120: Health Care Providers and Health Benefit Plans - Discrimination in Provision of Services.**

Sincerely,

MoCo Pride Center's Board of Directors:

*Ezra Towne, Han Malyn, Jill McCrory, John Grimes, Marty Drake,  
Phillip Alexander Downie, Renoir Dawson-Finan, Shelly Mohnkern*