

**HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF
HB 937 – Abortion Care Access Act**

**House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 22, 2022**



Health Care for the Homeless supports HB 937, which would establish the Abortion Clinical Care Training Program in the Maryland Department of Health and update Maryland's outdated law that only allows physicians to provide abortion care so that other qualified providers can perform abortions in Maryland. This bill will ensure Maryland has enough abortion providers so that people throughout Maryland have access to abortion care.

Abortion access shouldn't depend on zip code, yet two-thirds of Maryland counties do not have abortion providers. Individuals experiencing homelessness face particular barriers to receiving abortion care and health care generally. A lack of transportation and ability to travel is a key challenge to obtaining health care for these individuals. People should not be denied access to abortion care simply because there are not enough providers in certain jurisdictions. And in the minority of jurisdictions which do have providers, people should not be denied access to abortion care because they don't have the means to travel there.

To expand the provider community, we need to ensure that providers are able to work at the top of their license and provide abortion care that they are entirely qualified to perform. This bill would allow physicians, nurse practitioners nurse-midwives, licensed certified midwives, physician assistants and other providers who are licensed, certified or otherwise authorized by law to practice in the State and for whom abortion care is within the scope of the provider's license or certification.

Additionally, the bill would support clinical education in abortion care for the expanded pool of health practitioners that are included in this bill. More health care practitioners would provide abortion care if they are offered these ongoing training opportunities.

Abortion care is basic and essential health care. A lack of abortion care providers is a significant barrier in ensuring people throughout the state can access this essential health care. The expanded scope and training for providers, as HB 937 ensures, is critical in overcoming these barriers. We stand in strong support of this bill and we urge a favorable report.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland's leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We work to prevent and end homelessness for vulnerable individuals and families by providing quality, integrated health care and promoting access to affordable housing and sustainable incomes through direct service, advocacy, and community engagement. We deliver integrated medical care, mental health services, state-certified addiction treatment, dental care, social services, and housing support services for over 10,000 Marylanders annually at sites in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. For more information, visit www.hchmd.org.