

February 21, 2024

Statement on House Bill 691
Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment
House Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: Support

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of more than 1800 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We strongly urge you to support House Bill 691 to extend legal protection to all those receiving and providing gender-affirming health services in Maryland from criminal or civil actions brought from other states.

Gender-affirming care has been shown to dramatically increase mental health and wellbeing, and multiple major medical associations support comprehensive care for the trans community including the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and American Academy of Pediatrics.

Last year the General Assembly and Governor approved the Gender-Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act) to make MD Medical Assistance benefits available recipients of gender-affirming health care and services. This was a matter of basic health-equity consistent with the values of public policy in Maryland.

Unfortunately, as in the case of abortion services, numerous states have taken various actions to prohibit their residents from receiving, and medical professionals from providing gender-affirming health services. Worse, as also with reproductive health care, some states now have laws that may lead to criminal or civil actions against recipients and providers of gender-affirming care legally rendered in other states. In the case of reproductive health services, Maryland has already provided that those situations are now protected in our law as “legally protected health services”, to prohibit health occupations disciplinary actions and certain actions in criminal and civil proceedings and the use of certain records or resources in furtherance of investigations or criminal or civil proceedings.

House Bill 691 will provide the same protections for cases involving gender-affirming health care.

As a matter of health equity, and consistent with Maryland’s public policy, we urge you to give House Bill 691 a **Favorable** report.