



## Maryland Community Health System

**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Bill Number:** House Bill 691 – Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment

**Hearing Date:** February 21, 2024

**Position:** Support

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Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *House Bill 691 – Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment*. The bill expands Maryland’s shielding laws to protect people receiving gender affirming care, their families, and their providers.

MCHS is a network of seven federally qualified health centers with 55 sites serving communities across Maryland. Our mission is to provide somatic, behavioral, and oral health services to people who have been underserved. The LGBTQ+ community is an important constituency of our health centers. We are deeply concerned about the impact of gender affirming care bans on this community and our providers who serve them. Twenty-two states have banned gender affirming care for minors, including our neighboring state of West Virginia.

When a state bans gender affirming care, the impact is felt far beyond that state’s borders. Providers in other states have become fearful of the aggressive tactics of states like Texas, where the Attorney General is seeking the records of out-of-state patients from states as far away as Georgia and Washington. We can protect our providers and their patients by including gender affirming care in Maryland’s shielding law.

We ask for a favorable vote. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).