



MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS



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Maryland Section

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TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Members, House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable David Moon

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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DATE: February 21, 2024

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

On behalf of The Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, and the Maryland Section of The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 691.

Maryland has supported access to medically necessary gender affirming care. However, similar to access to abortion care and other reproductive health care services, many states have and/or are considering bans on gender affirming care. As a result, many residents of those States must travel out-of-state to access needed care. Many of the State laws not only ban access to services in their state but also seek to criminalize the care provided to their citizens in another State. The efforts to intimidate providers and patients in Maryland requires access to information about gender affirming care to be provided in our state.

Under electronic health record systems, protected health information, including gender affirming care health records, is easily transferred between states. Information sharing is allowed by law if it is related to coordination of care among a patient's providers. Under most circumstances, care coordination improves the health outcomes of patients. But in the case of gender affirming care, information sharing is putting health providers and patients at great risk. House Bill 691 provides extra layers of protection for gender affirming care health information in electronic health record systems, often called health information exchanges. The legislation also ensures Maryland's state government protects personal information of patients and providers that may be stored in state databases.

Access to and the safe provision of gender affirming care services in Maryland depends on protecting the personal information of our providers and patients. A favorable report is requested.