

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

HB 849 Public Health - Medical Records - Fees

March 24, 2021

Senate Finance Committee

My name is Tristan Roberts and I am the SOAR Coordinator at Health Care for the Homeless in Baltimore City. The SOAR team works with those who are experiencing homelessness or living in unstable housing. Receiving SSI/SSDI benefits could eliminate housing barriers for those who are most vulnerable and submitting medical records are a necessary part of an individual's application for benefits.

HB 849 will eliminate fees for medical records for people applying for public benefits such as Social Security Disability. By eliminating the fees for medical records for public benefits, HB 849 will ensure that low-income Marylanders can access the medical records they need to obtain important benefits.

This bill is critical in my efforts to assist seriously mentally ill people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness apply for public benefits. Fees for medical records are needed to prove disability, but very often the applicant has no funds to pay for these records, and my nonprofit is not in a position to cover the cost.

HB 849 would ensure that low income Marylanders can access the records they need to secure vital public benefits. For this reason, I support HB 849 and urge a favorable report.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of House Bill 849.