

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

### HB 849 Public Health - Medical Records - Fees

March 24, 2021

Senate Finance Committee

My name is Jason Decker and I am the SOAR lead and case manager for the Frederick Community Action Agency. My position covers Frederick and Washington Counties helping homeless individuals with mental illness apply for benefits such as Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Income, and with state benefits. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of House Bill 849.

HB 849 will eliminate fees for medical records for people applying for public benefits such as Social Security Disability.

This bill is critical in 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 most nonprofit organizations are not able to cover the cost.

While I work for a government agency and am not affected by these fees currently, I have worked for several organizations in the past for which these fees have posed a barrier for the people I serve.

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.

Thank you for your time,

Jason Decker, Case Manager

Frederick Community Action Agency