

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

HB 849 Public Health - Medical Records - Fees

March 24, 2021

Senate Finance Committee

My name is Marc A. Bowman and I am a Certified SOAR Specialist with Healthcare for the Homeless in Baltimore City, Maryland. SOAR stands for SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery. My role involves helping to expedite Social Security benefit claims for Veterans and nonveterans whom are chronically homeless or at risk of homelessness. Additionally, many of the persons I serve have severe and persistent mental health and medical problems, and fall well below the poverty line both locally and nationally. Also, the target population that I serve has very limited income or no income at all. 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 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.