

**Testimony in Support of SB 682**  
Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment  
Trans Health Equity Act of 2022  
Senate Finance Committee  
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Chair Kelley and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the chance to testify in support of Senate Bill 682.

I am a nurse practitioner in Baltimore City providing gender affirming medical care to hundreds of gender diverse patients. I meet them in the beginning of their journey as they come to realize that their gender does not align with their sex at birth. I use DSM-V criteria to determine if they have gender dysphoria, and follow internationally supported guidelines to offer medical treatment including gender affirming hormones. Hormone therapy is a very effective way to treat gender dysphoria, but it is only one part of the full scope of treatment. I believe that SB 682 is important because the medically necessary treatment my patients deserve includes multiple services and/or procedures such as: gender affirming surgeries (including facial feminization), hair removal/hair transplants, speech therapy/vocal surgery, body contouring and fertility preservation. The current regulations under Medicaid do not allow for patients to access all of these vital services. My patients' personal transition and integration into society is often stalled when they discover their insurance will not assist them in realizing their true gender identity.

Some examples of how my patients are affected:

- They are unable to afford oocyte or sperm preservation before starting hormone therapy (which is ideal as there may be negative effects of hormones on fertility potential), so they either delay treatment or defer fertility preservation altogether. This can contribute to anxiety and depression exacerbation and loss of the opportunity to create a family with their own DNA.
- They are unable to pursue genital hair removal due to cost; this may preclude access to gender affirming surgeries like vaginoplasty, which is a very common surgical goal (some surgeons require hair removal beforehand).
- They are unable to pursue facial feminization surgery (FFS) which would help create a more feminine appearance. FFS is extremely important as it assists the public to recognize their feminine gender identity in a visual manner which can prevent discrimination and violence.

Passing this bill would send a clear message to my patients that they matter, regardless of their gender identity. It would tell them that their legislators believe they deserve the right to access all available medical procedures and services to treat their gender dysphoria and live a full life. As their health care provider, I, too, would profoundly appreciate the breadth of opportunities this bill would give my patients.

**I strongly urge you to support SB 682 – my patients are counting on it!**

Thank you for your consideration,

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