

## **Testimony in Support of SB 682**

Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming  
Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act of 2022)  
Senate Finance Committee  
February 22nd, 2022

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Pikesville, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Baltimore County

Chair Delores Kelley and Members of the Committee,

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

I believe that SB 682 is important as it will enable Marylanders reliant on Medicaid who suffer from gender dysphoria to live a healthy, safe and productive life. As a transgender woman, I am acutely aware of the many challenges transgender individuals regularly face. From social isolation, restricted access to medical care, and lack of acceptance in the workforce, many transgender individuals find themselves facing increased challenges. Gender affirming procedures, as determined necessary by medical professionals, are essential to the well-being, health, and workforce integration of transgender individuals. These procedures often have lifesaving effects by alleviating the pernicious effects of gender dysphoria. They did for me.

In the long run these procedures have been shown to greatly reduce the impact gender dysphoria has on an individual, and therefore minimize the need for additional therapies and interventions. (In many cases treating one's gender dysphoria can greatly diminish or outright eliminate other conditions from which an individual may suffer, such as depression or reliance on drugs or alcohol).

Additionally, medically necessary treatments and procedures reduce the isolation and social ostracization many transgender individuals undergo in the workforce. This could mean less reliance on other social support programs such as unemployment, food stamps, and welfare.

For some time now Maryland has failed to meet the current reasonable standards established by the medical community regarding the scope of care and treatment of trans individuals. SB 682 moves Maryland forward by ensuring that

*medical professionals* can determine the appropriate level of care for our citizens reliant on Medicaid services. Doing so will likely *decrease* reliance on health services in the long term for many of these individuals. As such, it makes sense from not only an ethical perspective, but also an economic one.

I would urge you to consider the following study, published in 2016 in the Journal of General Internal Medicine, which analyzed the societal implications of health insurance coverage for medically necessary services within the transgender community, specifically looking at cost-effectiveness:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4803686/>

In summary, it was determined that any additional expenses “hold good value for reducing the risk of negative endpoints – HIV, depression, suicidality, and drug abuse.”

*Please do what you can to support us.  
I strongly urge you to support SB 682.*

Thank you for your consideration,

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