

Testimony in Support of HB 746

Maryland Medical Assistance Program: Gender-Affirming Treatment
Trans Health Equity Act of 2022
Health and Government Operations Committee
March 3rd, 2022

Calvin Schuster
District 46

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 746. My name is Calvin Schuster and I am a medical student at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. One of the first lessons I learned during my medical education is the importance of equitable access to care, particularly for marginalized patient populations that are already facing health disparities. HB 746 addresses a critical issue of health inequity that currently exists in Maryland: lack of access to medically necessary gender-affirming care.

Maryland Medicaid is denying coverage for many important gender-affirmation care services, and by doing so is going against modern standard of care recommendations as outlined by professional medical organizations such as the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, the American Medical Association,¹ and the American College of Physicians,² and as decided directly between patients and their providers. As a medical student, I have been able to speak with healthcare professionals at Hopkins and beyond over the past many months, and these conversations with my mentors, educators, and other physician advocates have shown me the overwhelming support of current healthcare providers for this bill. It is vital to address this inequity to further the overall health of our community.

As well as a medical student, I am also a transgender man, and I have experienced first-hand the importance of gender-affirming care in my own life. Being able to access all of the care that myself and my providers deemed medically necessary for my own transition has improved my quality of life drastically. Accessing care has enabled me to live authentically as myself, to focus on my education, and to become an active and thriving member of my community. If I were unable to access the care that I needed, I am confident that I would not have made it to where I am today.

To deny your transgender neighbors, family, friends, and loved ones this critically important care is to deny them the opportunity to live fully and authentically as themselves. It is to perpetuate

¹ American Medical Association (AMA) House of Delegates (HOD): Removing Financial Barriers to Care for Transgender Patients. Resolution: 122 (A-08), 2008

² Daniel H. Butkus R; Health and Public Policy Committee of American College of Physicians: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender health disparities: Executive summary of a policy position paper from the American College of Physicians. *Ann Intern Med* 2015;163:135–137.

unnecessary suffering by enabling discriminatory medical inequity, and it goes against the recommendations of modern medicine. Supporting HB 746 will help bring Maryland inline with current, scientifically-supported and evidence-based standards of care. Please consider supporting HB 746 to help create a happier, healthier, and more equitable Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Calvin Schuster

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