

Testimony on HB 0746

Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act of 2022)

February 28, 2022

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Hana Minsky
Legislative District 46

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of HB 0746. My name is Hana Minsky, and I am a resident of Baltimore City and an MD/PhD student at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. While I am not transgender myself, I believe this bill is of crucial importance, both medically and morally, to support all members of our community.

Before moving to Baltimore, I collaborated with the Gender Health Center of Sacramento in Northern California. This center provided gender-affirming services to transgender and gender non-conforming individuals regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. While volunteering at the Gender Health Center, I met people who had traveled many hours – sometimes even from out of state – to access these essential services.

When I moved to Maryland, I was very happy to learn that Medicaid Maryland currently covers many gender-affirming procedures and treatments. However, there is currently a discrepancy in other necessary services such as voice modification surgery and therapy, hair alteration treatments, and surgeries to regions of the body such as the abdomen. HB 0746 would close these gaps in coverage, providing needed therapeutic options for many Marylanders.

Additionally, the transition process is just that– a process. It is multidimensional, encompassing social elements as well as physical and medical elements. Passing HB 0746 would recognize the complexity of this process and allow Medicaid Maryland to support transgender and gender non-conforming individuals at a critical period in their lives. In that sense, this bill can be seen as potentially life-saving.

Chair Pendergrass, I know that your legislative career has had a tremendous impact towards making Maryland's healthcare system more accessible and effective. I hope that you will support HB 0746 to ensure that Medicaid Maryland is similarly accessible, effective, and life-affirming for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Hana B. Minsky

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