



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 746

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

House Health and Government Operations Committee
March 2, 2022

Submitted by Julia Gross and Kali Schumitz, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

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Marylanders Against Poverty

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Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports HB 746 which updates outdated standards in Maryland's Medicaid program for coverage of gender-affirming treatments and ensures transgender people experiencing poverty in Maryland can get the essential health care they need.

Transgender Marylanders [frequently report experiencing discrimination](#) that affects their ability to get and keep employment, complete their education, and maintain stable housing. As a result, transgender people experience poverty at twice the rate of the general population. Transgender people of color face even greater barriers because of the combination of racial and transgender discrimination. [One national survey](#) found that more than one-third of Black transgender people nationwide lived on less than \$10,000 per year.

Medicaid is a vital lifeline that ensures people experiencing poverty can get the health care they need, and it should be as inclusive as possible. The standards the Maryland Medical Assistance Program is currently using to make decisions about care that transgender people are eligible for are outdated. SB 682 would bring them in line with the more comprehensive standards already in place in nine other states and Washington, D.C.

The cost to the state would be modest. All of the services covered in the bill are federally reimbursable, and there are only about 2,000 transgender Marylanders enrolled in Medicaid. More importantly, transgender Marylanders who are living in poverty would be able to receive the gender-affirming care that is essential for their mental health and well-being.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 746.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.