



Support: SB 460 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender–Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act)

2/24/2023

Maryland Senate
Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) and fellow pediatric-focused advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) Chesapeake Chapter, I am writing to express our **Support for SB 460 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender–Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act)**.

We support the requirement for the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to provide medical necessary gender-affirming treatment as prescribed by a qualified medical provider. Gender affirming care includes hormone therapies, physical appearance alterations, voice alterations, fertility preservation, and surgeries. These treatments occur under the care of a licensed medical provider for the treatment of gender dysphoria. Under the Affordable Care Act, discrimination in healthcare on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability, is prohibited. For the estimated 2 million transgender individuals across the United States, gender-affirming care is an essential medical treatment and denial of this prescribed therapy could cause significant harm.

Transgender individuals experience disproportionately worse health outcomes than their peers. They are significantly more likely to receive harassment, discrimination, be the victim of physical or sexual assault, or have severe depression and poor mental health. Transgender adolescents and young adults are two times more likely to seriously consider and/or attempt suicide compared to cisgender LGBQ peers, which is inflated by the fact that LGBTQ youth in general are four times more likely to attempt suicide than non-LGBTQ peers. More than half of all transgender youth are estimated to have seriously consider attempting suicide in the past year. Gender affirming care is therefore lifesaving care. Studies have shown that gender-affirming care is linked to significant decreases in mental health disparities, with one study showing a 60% decrease in severe depression and 73% decrease in suicidal ideation.

Continuing to allow the Maryland Medical Assistance Programs denies these medically necessary treatments to the 25% of our state's population enrolled in the program, which could significantly impact our already evergrowing mental health crisis. For these reasons the Maryland Chesapeake Chapter of NAPNAP extends their **Support for SB 460 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender–Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act)**.

The pediatric advanced practice nurses of your state are grateful to you for your attention to these crucial issues. The members of Chesapeake Chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse



Practitioners are committed to improving the health and advocating for Maryland's pediatric patients. If we can be of any further assistance, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lindsay J. Ward , the Chesapeake Chapter President at 410-507-3642 or lindsayjward@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

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