

Testimony of the Alzheimer's Association Greater Maryland and National Capital Area Chapters
SB 460 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act)
Position: Favorable

Chair Griffith and Vice Chair Klausmeier,

The Alzheimer's Association – representing the over 110,000 Marylanders with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, along with their caregivers – is here today in strong support of Senate Bill 460, the Trans Health Equity Act. This legislation requires, beginning on January 1, 2024, the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to provide gender-affirming treatment in a nondiscriminatory manner; requires that the gender-affirming treatment be assessed according to nondiscriminatory criteria that are consistent with current clinical standards; prohibits the issuance of an adverse benefit determination related to gender-affirming treatment unless a certain experienced health care provider has reviewed and confirmed the appropriateness of the determination.

There are over 110,000 Marylanders with Alzheimer's and dementia in Maryland; a number that is expected to grow to over 130,000 by 2025. Of this population, research has shown that 7.4% of them are living with Alzheimer's and related dementia (ARD). Our transgender and gender nonbinary adults are more likely to report worsening memory and thinking, functional limitations and depression compared to cisgender (non-transgender) adults. ⁱTransgender adults — individuals who identify with a gender different than the one assigned to them at birth — were nearly twice as likely to report SCD and more than twice as likely to report SCD-related functional limitations, such as reduced ability to work, volunteer or be social.

Our state needs to step up and help. 51% of LGBT people report being very concerned about having enough money to live on. And 40% say their support networks have become smaller over time. This bill suggests a solution which brings Maryland into compliance with federal guidelines, allows for federally reimbursable services, and costs only .0005% of our Medicaid budget. We urge a favorable report on this legislation.

ⁱ https://aaic.alz.org/releases_2021/transgender-adults-cognition.asp