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February 28, 2023

SB0 460 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender–Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act)

Position: FAVORABLE

The Board of Directors of Annapolis Pride enthusiastically supports Senate Bill 0460, which is essential in helping to create an equitable and inclusive healthcare system in Maryland. It is vital that transgender individuals have access to the medical care they need without fear of discrimination or denial of services.

The legislation would update the Maryland Department of Health's policy on gender-affirming care to ensure coverage for all medically necessary treatments related to an individual's gender identity. These treatments would be prescribed by a licensed healthcare provider, and would adhere to the most up-to-date, non-discriminatory standards. By doing so, the bill would bring the state's Medicaid program in line with the latest best practices. The bill specifies that the Medicaid program cannot adopt blanket denials for types of transition-related care, and instead creates a policy that medical necessity must always be determined in the context of the individual's circumstances.

Medicaid currently has over 30 categorical exclusions that have been in place for decades. By passing this vital legislation and removing these exclusions, Maryland will be joining other states in providing a best-practice standard of care for transgender individuals, which includes many procedures that are essential to their daily lives.

This legislation will also establish nondiscriminatory criteria, ensuring transgender individuals are not denied care due to their gender identity, as well as reducing the stigma and discrimination faced by transgender individuals.

For these reasons, Annapolis Pride respectfully requests an unfavorable report on HB 0359.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaden T. Farris
Board Member
Annapolis Pride