

**Testimony in Support of HB 283**  
Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment  
Trans Health Equity Act of 2023  
Health and Government Operations Committee  
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Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the chance to testify in support of House Bill 283. My name is Abigail Ulman and I am a resident of District 46. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 283, the Trans Health Equity Act, which would expand Maryland Medicaid to cover lifesaving gender-affirming care.

The Trans Health Equity Act (THEA) addresses a critical gap in the healthcare of transgender Marylanders by ensuring Medicaid coverage for gender-affirming healthcare. Currently, Maryland Medicaid excludes many gender-affirming procedures. There is consensus in the medical community that these procedures are medically necessary and reduce suicide, abuse, discrimination, and harassment. THEA is a low-cost solution that improves the quality of life of trans Marylanders, brings Maryland Medicaid into compliance with federal law, and meets current medical standards.

As both a Master of Public Health student at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and a transgender person, my personal and professional experience have underscored the importance of HB 283. This bill would not only bring Maryland into compliance with federal legal guidelines and ensure an equitable standard of care for all Marylanders, but also provide life-saving care for people who need it the most. Every major medical association, including the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, has supported gender-affirming care as medically necessary.

I have been lucky to have been covered under private insurance for almost all of my life, and have been able to access gender-affirming medical care when I need it. However, this may not always be the case and access to care for myself and other trans people should not depend on whether or not we have access to private health insurance. For Medicaid to truly serve all people as intended, all gender-affirming care – as defined by the patient – should be affordable, accessible, and provided without discrimination and stigma.

The removal of restrictions and guidelines for accessing gender-affirming care and the expansion of services covered under Medicaid are essential for providing a full spectrum of care for all transgender Marylanders. By passing this bill and expanding gender-affirming care services, Maryland will save costs from reduced long-term physical and mental health complications, including a 84% reduction in suicide attempts. Trans people already face discrimination in all aspects of life, including housing and employment. By expanding the care covered under Medicaid to ensure we are able to access care that helps us alleviate gender dysphoria and match our gender expression with our gender identity, we are less likely to face discrimination and are more likely to have an enhanced quality of life.

Gender-affirming care that respects patients' needs and is accessible, affordable, and non-discriminatory saves lives.

The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of Johns Hopkins University and Medicine, although I am pleased to note that Johns Hopkins does officially support this legislation

I strongly urge you to advocate for the passage of HB 283 to save lives and improve the health of many transgender residents across the state.

Thank you for your consideration,

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