



END MEDICAL DEBT MARYLAND

Testimony on SB460/HB283
Trans Health Equity Act of 2023
Position: **FAVORABLE**

To Chair Griffith and the Senate Finance Committee; Chair Peña-Melnyk and the House Health & Government Operations Committee:

As a coalition of more than 60 organizations across the state of Maryland fighting injustice in our healthcare system, End Medical Debt Maryland endorses SB460/HB283: the Trans Health Equity Act of 2023. We urge the committee to issue a FAVORABLE report.

Gender-affirming care, like most healthcare in the United States, can be astronomically expensive for patients. The Maryland Medical Assistance (Medicaid) Program fails to cover all types of gender-affirming care, and as a result, low-income transgender Marylanders are often unable to receive coverage for lifesaving treatments. Marylanders who seek gender-affirming care are left to depend on employer-provided insurance or purchase private insurance at high costs, a luxury that is not accessible to all. Even those fortunate enough to have private insurance coverage often find their plans do not cover gender-affirming care. Employers frequently purchase plans that do not cover the health needs of transgender workers, whether out of transphobia or a general lack of awareness about the necessity of gender-affirming care to save lives.

By allowing healthcare providers to determine the medical necessity of Gender Affirming Care, as this bill does, we can ensure low-income Marylanders have coverage through Medicaid for this life saving care, regardless of their employment status. No Marylander should be made to choose between pursuing the care they need and accumulating medical debt. That is the choice we are currently requiring of low-income transgender Marylanders who depend on Medicaid for healthcare coverage. Either option can lead to devastating consequences. End Medical Debt Maryland respectfully urges the Committee to remove barriers to gender affirming healthcare by voting YES on the Trans Health Equity Act.

In Unity,

Brige Dumais, Coalition Co-Chair
brigitte.dumais@1199.org

###

End Medical Debt Maryland is a statewide coalition of 60+ organizations and community members working together to pass comprehensive medical billing reform, educate Marylanders on their rights as patients, and eliminate barriers to healthcare. We are labor unions, faith leaders, patient advocates, consumer rights proponents, lawyers, healthcare providers, and people directly impacted by medical debt. Collectively, we represent over 350,000 Marylanders. Learn more at www.bit.ly/emdmaryland