

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 Ahjeetha Shankar. 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.

I believe that HB 283 is important because health care should be accessible and inclusive for everyone in our country. Especially as a future physician, I am passionate about providing compassionate, high-quality care to all of my future patients and I can better do that if the THEA is passed. Healthcare and legislation go hand in hand. Only by working together can we lead to a country where everyone feels safe, comfortable, and heard—fully able to access the care they need without encountering any barriers.

To make Maryland more equitable and inclusive for everyone, I strongly urge you to support HB 283.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ahjeetha Shankar