

Testimony in Support of HB 283
Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment
Trans Health Equity Act of 2023
Health and Government Operations Committee
February 14, 2023

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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 Greg Pommier 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.

I believe that HB 283 is important because it would increase access to life-saving care. As a first year medical student, I have not yet had the privilege of caring for transgender and sexually diverse patients, but I have already observed the positive impacts gender-affirming care can have. Numerous studies show the improved quality of life experienced by accessing these treatments, including the one listed here, which I found particularly striking because of the wide-ranging impacts it had on the health of transgender and gender diverse people:

TGD people with a history of gender-affirming surgery had significantly lower odds of past-month psychological distress, past-year tobacco smoking, and past-year suicidal ideation compared with TGD people with no history of gender-affirming surgery.”
(Almazan, A. N. et al. JAMA Surg. 156, 611–618 (2021).)

I strongly urge you to support this legislation and thus show your support for the transgender and gender diverse communities, as well as the larger LGBTQ+ community.

Lastly, although I am a medical student at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, the views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of Johns Hopkins University and Medicine, though I am pleased to note that Johns Hopkins does officially support this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Greg Pommier
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