

**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.

I believe that HB 283 is important because I am trans and gender-affirming treatment has saved my life. There were times in my life I had lost the will to live. I did not know who I was. I did not recognize my own body. I wanted to change but I did not know how. I was actively suicidal. I was at the worst point in my life. I was killing myself in all these ways. There was not much I had left to live for, as a stranger to myself.

Exactly two years ago, I checked myself into an intensive outpatient program in the recognition that if I didn't, I would have died. It was arduous. I had to confront parts of myself I had kept buried deep in fear of self-destruction, but I was already there. The intergenerational trauma had manifested itself in me destroying myself. At the program, I learned a lot about myself. My main takeaway was that I needed to affirm my transness through hormone therapy. Soon after, I was lucky enough to start testosterone therapy and started to feel more like myself.

Many of my friends are transgender. Many of them do not have access to healthcare, gender-affirming or otherwise, for any number of reasons. Some are unemployed, some are unhoused, some are not out. Many of these trans friends are also people of color, who face even higher rates of abuse, violence, and death by homicide or suicide.

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.

Please, in support of your community and especially the marginalized trans community, I strongly urge you to support HB 283.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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