

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 Karen Qi. I am a resident of District 11. 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.

Having conducted adolescent mental health research at the NIH, I have seen how important a bill like HB 283 can be to youth who are questioning their gender identity. Non-binary and transgender youth were significantly more vulnerable to depression, especially when they did not have a strong support system or feel safe around their healthcare providers. However, when adolescents were able to confide in their healthcare team and discuss their options for gender-affirming care, they could feel more comfortable with themselves and improve their well-being.

Please do what you can to support health equity across all genders. I strongly urge you to support HB 283.

Thank you for your consideration,

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