

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.

I believe that HB 283 is a critically important bill to pass in order to protect access to care for people in Maryland. This is a clear-cut example of a well-established health intervention that is known to be deeply impactful for the people who use it, that is not entirely accessible for low-income Marylanders. For people who are transgender or gender-nonconforming, access to various gender-affirming care is paramount. This population experiences severe disparities in things like depression and suicide and other health problems, as well as experiencing violence. Access to gender-affirming care can be hugely impactful to alleviate those burdens.

This bill specifically is widely supported by physicians, health advocates, policy experts, and most importantly the LGBTQ patient community. There is no question about its importance and potential benefit. The federal government has named gender-affirming care as an “essential health benefit”, and protected under Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act. It is backed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Other state governments, and every major medical association (AMA, APA, and AAP) have supported this bill.

Policy makers realistically need to factor costs into their decisions, and HB 283 is a sustainable and in fact cost-saving measure. The services included in this bill are federally reimbursable, and is a miniscule (0.005%) of Maryland’s medicaid budget. It is well known that improving access to preventive care and improving health equity improves long-term outcomes and reduces the need for expensive interventions in the future. This bill is an example of such a policy that is expected to have that effect.

As a future physician, and out of concern for my friends, community members and future patients, I call on you to vote YES on HB283 and make this necessary, life-saving care accessible for low-income people in Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration,

John Loftus