

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

Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the chance to testify in support of House Bill 283. My name is Scar Guo. I am a resident of Baltimore City 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 views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of Johns Hopkins University and Medicine, although I am pleased to note that Johns Hopkins does officially support this legislation.

As a trans individual going through a transition with medical assistance, I understand first-hand the importance of HB 283. I am lucky enough to be a medical student with school-sponsored insurance that covers gender-affirming care and transition care. Studies have shown that “receipt of gender-affirming care, including puberty blockers and gender-affirming hormones, was associated with 60% lower odds of moderate or severe depression and 73% lower odds of suicidality over a 12-month follow-up.” (Tordoff et al. 2022) I can personally say that this care has saved my life so that I can pursue my dream of bettering the lives of others. HB 283 would give the same opportunity to Medicaid recipients with even more socioeconomically disadvantaged circumstances than mine. This bill would give trans individuals the same chance to pursue life and happiness that any other person should have.

As a medical student going into emergency medicine, I know just how emotionally, spiritually, and financially expensive emergencies of all kinds are. It has been shown that gender-affirming care can reduce suicide attempts up to 84% which could result in fewer psychiatric hospitalizations. The discrimination that trans people face is also incredibly costly as 24% of trans Marylanders are evicted or denied housing due to their gender identity. Gender-affirming care can help people better align with their gender identity and prevent this discrimination. HB 283 could serve to decrease both these expensive consequences and translate to savings for Maryland.

I strongly urge Maryland to follow in the footsteps of other states that have chosen to protect the lives and wellbeing of their trans citizens including Virginia, Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Washington State, California, New York, Washington, and D.C. by passing HB 283. Know that you will have the support of every major medical association, including the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics as well as invested citizens like me.

Thank you for your consideration,

Scar Guo
27 N Montford Ave
Baltimore, MD 21224