

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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Baltimore; District 46

Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the chance to testify in support of House Bill 283. My name is Zoe Hahn. 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 critical in protecting transgender Marylanders and ensuring members of our community can access much needed gender affirming care. You have the opportunity to advocate for transgender people's safety, health, and pursuit of happiness by passing this bill, at a time in which transgender communities continue to be targeted across the country. By allowing transgender people access to gender-affirming care, you can reduce discrimination and harassment, and empower transgender people to build healthier and happier lives for themselves and their loved ones. There is already an abundance of evidence that gender affirming care makes an incredible difference in the lives of transgender youths and adults: "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. Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care. JAMA Netw Open. 2022;5(2):e220978. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.0978) To be frank, given the importance of gender affirming care, we as Marylanders cannot afford to ignore this opportunity to materially better the lives and medical care of Marylanders. Additionally, these services are federally reimbursable and cost a fraction of our Medicare budget, while saving costs significantly long term by preventing further mental and physical harms impacting transgender Marylanders.

I strongly urge you to support HB 283.

Thank you for your consideration,

Zoe Hahn
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