



SB460/HB283: Trans Health Equity Act of 2023
Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment
Position: Favorable

Chair Griffith and Members of the Senate Finance Committee; Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee:

My name is Brige Dumais and my pronouns are they/them. I am the Political Coordinator with 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, the largest healthcare workers union in the nation. We represent 10,000 members who work in hospitals, non-profit community based health centers, and Long-Term Care facilities across Maryland/DC. Hundreds of our members work at LGBTQ community health centers that provide gender affirming healthcare (GAC); and we represent union members who are Trans & Queer. Our union supports SB460/HB283: the Trans Health Equity Act to require the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to cover medically necessary gender-affirming treatment. We urge the committee to issue a **favorable** as amended report.

Transgender people are more likely to live in poverty than our cisgender counterparts, so there is a gap in the ability of low-income transgender people in Maryland to access affordable GAC. Transgender Marylanders are currently being forced to navigate an unjust, tiered healthcare system where certain **medially necessary** GAC is not covered through Medicaid. Transgender patients' ability to have health insurance that covers GAC should not be based on their employer's willingness to provide health insurance in the first place, and certainly should not be subject to any employer's potential biases against transgender people that would cause the employer to deliberately not provide insurance plans that cover GAC. **The medical necessity of GAC, like any other healthcare, should be a decision made between a patient and their healthcare provider.**

GAC is lifesaving healthcare. Access to GAC improves the overall quality of life for transgender people by drastically reducing the risk of depression and suicide, being targeted by anti-trans violence, and other types of discrimination and stigmatization that trans people face.

1199SEIU supports the bill as amended to require consent from healthcare providers to have our names listed on a public directory, as it is important for the safety of healthcare workers. Please vote **YES** on this life saving legislation and amendment to expand access to healthcare for transgender Marylanders.

In Unity,

Brige Dumais, Political Coordinator
bridgette.dumais@1199.org