

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-Melnik and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the chance to testify in support of House Bill 283. My name is Evelien van Gelderen. I am a resident of District 16. 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 important because this care is medically necessary and needs to be protected under the law. Much research has shown that gender-affirming healthcare is both necessary and cost-saving in the long run. For example, 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 according to Tordoff et al. Additionally, Maryland will save costs from reduced long-term physical and mental health complications, such as a 84% reduction in suicide attempts.

I have personally seen the negative impacts withholding medically necessary care from transgenders individuals in my own life. One of my friends, who is transgender, struggled to receive care and had many difficulties and fears surrounding accessing healthcare. They would benefit directly from this bill and their life would be improved drastically with the passage of this bill.

Please do what you can to support this community/fix this issue. I strongly urge you to support HB 283.

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.

Thank you for your consideration,

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Citations

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