

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-Melnyk and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the chance to testify in support of House Bill 283. My name is Xian Mao. I am a resident of District 14. 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.

Insurance is a major hurdle for many transgender individuals seeking gender affirming care. By expanding access to gender affirming care via Medicaid, you will vastly decrease the suicide rate in the transgender population. In addition, gender affirming care allows transgender individuals to live their fullest lives.

For many transgender individuals on Medicaid, access to gender-affirming care is only a dream. Medical care as basic as contraception and mental health care are underutilized in my community. As a transgender medical student, I have seen many people both as a healthcare provider and as a member of the community voice a want for gender affirming care without a clear path forward. Increasing Medicaid coverage can help increase access and improve the lives of many people.

I strongly urge you to support HB 283 and expand Medicaid to protect the health of transgender individuals.

Thank you for your consideration,
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