

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 10, 2023

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is Dr. Sergio Lizama. I am a resident of Baltimore City, Third District. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB283, the Trans Health Equity Act, which would expand Maryland Medicaid to cover lifesaving gender-affirming care.

As a board-certified clinical endocrinologist with a special interest in gender-affirming care, I have been caring for the transgender community in Maryland for the past 8 years.

The Maryland transgender community faces daily discrimination, disproportionate rates of violence, and several barriers to fair healthcare access. The Endocrine Society, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, amongst other major medical societies endorse and consider gender-affirming care as life-saving interventions. Currently, there are around 6,000 transgender Marylanders enrolled in Medicaid. Offering comprehensive healthcare coverage to this vulnerable population will not only save costs in the short and long-term, but will also help improve fair healthcare access and reduce discrimination in the state of Maryland.

While Medicaid has been covering gender-affirming care in Maryland since 2015, the coverage is limited and outdated. Often not following evidence-based practices or updated standards of care. Some of these Marylanders are my patients and struggle accessing some of the proposed services causing distress, depression, and sometimes also attempting against their own lives. Robust scientific evidence supports gender-affirming care as a critical intervention that can lead to better mental health outcomes. Offering comprehensive healthcare coverage will save costs and reduce mental health complications, including a reduction in suicide attempts. This minuscule percent of beneficiaries deserves these proposed services. My patients deserve these services to achieve goals of continuity of care and positive health outcomes across their life-span.

Chair and Members. Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to support HB 283 and give our transgender community the opportunity to access healthcare services they deserve.

Sergio Lizama, MD
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