

**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 opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 283 and for your time in reviewing this testimony. My name is Hana, and 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 critically important because all Marylanders, and all people, deserve to have their medical needs met. This bill will help to ensure that a critical gap in Maryland Medicaid is filled. The federal government has named gender-affirming care as an “essential health benefit” protected under Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act. This has been upheld in federal district courts, and is backed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Many other states, including our neighbors in Virginia and Washington, D.C., have already supported these measures. Every major medical association, including the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, has also supported these measures.

The provision of gender affirming care is cost effective in many ways. These services are federally reimbursable and cost only 0.005% of our Medicaid budget. Maryland will save costs from reduced long-term physical and mental health complications, such as an 84% reduction in suicide attempts and a significantly decreased burden of psychological distress, tobacco use, and both moderate and severe depression.

Finally, the passage of this bill can and will save lives. As a medical student, I am dedicating my career to caring for others in my community. This is what you, as a legislator, have also done. I trust and hope that we can work together, such as through the passage of this bill, in order to ensure the highest quality of life to those in our care. Please, consider how many lives will be improved and saved through this expansion of care. Not just the lives of those receiving care, but the lives of their friends and family, their communities, and all of Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration,

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