

House Bill 283

Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment

Trans Health Equity Act

February 14, 2023

Support

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

My name is Michele Levy. I am a resident of District 43. 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.

More times than I can count, I have had the joy of celebrating and supporting transgender and gender non-conforming members of my community undergoing gender affirming medical treatment. These procedures have not been easy. Recovery is often grueling, challenging, and protracted. But these procedures have, in many instances, quite literally saved their lives.

Maryland has long recognized the insufficiencies in the federal Medicaid program. I am proud to live in a state whose Medicaid expansion has sought to provide critical healthcare to a broader swath of residents. Currently, Maryland is relying on 20-year old guidelines for the needs of Maryland's trans community, which is devastatingly outdated and puts us far beyond states like Virginia, Washington, D.C., and others offering more robust and relevant care.

Approximately 2,000 transgender Marylanders are enrolled in Medicaid. HB283 is a critical and cost-effective measure; services are federally reimbursable and will only be used by a nominal percentage of Maryland's population. But beyond the financial impact, this bill would provide essential, life-saving care to low-income Marylanders on Medicaid. The ability to live authentically, and to access medically necessary care, should not be limited to those with private insurance.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB283.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michele Levy