

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 Shuait Nair. I am a resident of District 7 of Maryland. 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 to me, gender-affirming health care is a right to health. Our country prides itself on protecting the rights and identity of its citizens and it is imperative that this pride extend to the rights of transgender individuals living in the US. I am a current medical student at Johns Hopkins University and we have had several panels this year on gender-affirming care from the world's leading clinicians. At every panel, the same message is conveyed to students: the impact of gender-affirming care is life changing, yet despite its profound impact, the majority of transgender patients seeking gender-affirming care cannot receive it because of financial barriers that insurance companies are unwilling to compromise on. Many of us students here would be honored to have the opportunity to provide gender-affirming surgeries and care to our patients -- we plead that you do not stop us from letting us pursue our jobs and allow us to perform our oath to protect the dignity, autonomy, and health of every patient we come across.

I very strongly urge you to support HB 283 on behalf of the health care community.

Thank you for your consideration,

Shuait Nair
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