



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 283

February 14, 2023

TO: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Londyn Smith de Richelieu, Director of the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs

RE: House Bill 283 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Kelly, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 283.

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health has established standards of care for gender-affirming medical procedures, including hormone therapy, surgical procedures, fertility aid, voice and communication therapy, general medical care, and behavioral health interventions. Additionally, the Endocrine Society's clinical practice recommendations encourage care that is gender affirming. These recommendations make up the accepted practice for treating gender dysphoria. While not all transgender and nonbinary people will desire or seek any or all of these medically necessary services, limiting access to them can have detrimental and life-threatening effects. Gender-affirming care is highly individualized. The American Medical Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Nursing, and the American Psychiatric Association, among other significant U.S. medical organizations, have issued statements in support.

Adults who identify as transgender or nonbinary frequently encounter difficulties and impediments in obtaining the necessary medical care, and their health consequences are worse than those of their cisgender peers. Persons who identify as transgendered are more likely than cisgender adults to lack health insurance, report being in poor health, have lower household incomes, and experience financial hurdles to treatment. Given their lower wages, Medicaid is crucial to transgender people's access to healthcare. According to a Williams Institute analysis from 2019, of the 1.4 million transgender persons living in the US, 152,000 have Medicaid, therefore it is a low cost solution with insurmountable impact.

There is variation in coverage for specific services unlike those of private insurance carriers most states, and not addressing coverage in our state Medicaid programs will potentially leave many low-income transgender and nonbinary people without access to medically necessary health services.

The Biden Administration has proposed a new rule on Section 1557 that is consistent with their previous guidance and states that excluding coverage for gender-affirming care constitutes sex discrimination.

Baltimore's Article for further exclaims the city's own language against discrimination towards gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression.

The Honorable Mayor Brandon M Scott has stated in the past, "Equity will be my guiding principle", the MOLGBTQ is driven by this commitment and testifies enthusiastically in support of this bill that provides lifesaving medical services and equal protections for those seeking gender affirming care. There may be equality in access to Medicaid but without this bill there is no equity in services for transgender Marylanders. We are committed to providing a healthy Baltimore where our citizens can thrive authentically with equal access.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 283.