



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 508
Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Required
Coverage for Aesthetic Services and Restorative Care for Victims of
Domestic Violence (Healing Our Scars Act)

Chair Biedle and Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce and provide important details regarding Senate Bill 508 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Required Coverage for Aesthetic Services and Restorative Care for Victims of Domestic Violence (Healing Our Scars Act)

For the record, I am Senator Shaneka Helson from the 30th Legislative District of Anne Arundel County, MD.

The intention of SB508 is to address a problem within our medical coverage system relating to victims of domestic violence who have experienced horrific disfiguring physical injuries to their bodies and require restorative and aesthetic care. While codes used by practitioners for various types of medical treatment for domestic violence victims cover burns, wounds, amputation dental etc., there are none that address the long-term impacts of these often-disfiguring physical injuries. And, because acts of domestic violence are often underreported, the ability to have these impacts treated and properly coded for payment do not occur.

The goal of SB 508 is to make sure that the Maryland Medical Assistant Program and other health insurance groups cover this care. It would require all insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations (collectively known as carriers), as well as Medicaid, to provide coverage to a victim of domestic violence for aesthetic services and restorative care, in the treatment of disfiguring physical injuries caused by domestic violence and determined to be medically essential by a licensed physician. The bill takes effect January 1, 2026, and applies to all policies, contracts, and health benefit plans issued, delivered, or renewed in the State on or after that date.

We are grateful for the support of the Maryland Department of Health and their suggested amendments; and also in discussion with the Maryland Insurance Administration to clarify language needed for the industry's coverage as well as those of the amended HB0381.

Speaking to the basis of the need for this legislation is:

- The Honorable Krystal Oriadha, Prince George's County Council
- The Honorable Ashanti Martinez, House of Delegates

As well as affected residents

After you hear the testimony from those here today, I urge that you give a favorable report to SB 508.