



BILL NO: Senate Bill 508
TITLE: Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Required Coverage for Aesthetic Services and Restorative Care for Victims of Domestic Violence (Healing Our Scars Act)
COMMITTEE: Finance
HEARING DATE: February 11, 2025
POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the Senate Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 508 with amendments.**

Senate Bill 508 would require the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and certain insurers, nonprofit health service plans, health maintenance organizations, and managed care organizations to provide coverage to victims of domestic violence for certain aesthetic services and restorative care. MNADV supports this bill but offers a friendly amendment to include a wider swath of victims than currently delineated in the bill.

Physical abuse can have both immediate and long-term effects. Immediate physical effects will depend on the severity of the assault, ranging from bruising and abrasions to broken bones, internal bleeding, head injuries, permanent disability and death. But non-life-threatening physical abuse can still have devastating long term impacts that can be psychological – post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, suicidal behavior, substance abuse – and physical – arthritis, migraines and chronic pain.¹ Having the ability to obtain treatment for the physical injury can in turn assist the survivor in managing their emotional and mental state.

SB 508 will assist survivors to move forward without the visible reminders of the abuse they experienced.

As drafted SB 508 uses a restrictive definition of who would receive coverage. “Victim of domestic violence” means an individual who has received deliberate, severe, and demonstrable physical injury, or is in fear of imminent deliberate, severe, and demonstrable physical injury from a current or former spouse, or a current or former cohabitant, as defined in § 4–501 of this subtitle. This would not include victim survivors who have a child in common but are not married. Nor would it include someone who had been in a sexual relationship with their abuser within the past year. We can think of no reason why

¹ <https://safesteps.org.au/understanding-family-violence/types-of-abuse/physical-abuse/>. Last viewed 1/27/2025.

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the injuries sustained in those relationships should not also be covered by SB 508 and suggest an amendment to “any person eligible for relief” pursuant to MD FL Code Ann. §4-501 et seq.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 508 with amendments.**