



**Senate Bill 129**  
**Public Health- Maryland Commission on Health Equity**  
**Advisory Committee and Hospital Reporting**  
**January 30, 2025**  
**Support**

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

TRAC submits this testimony in support of SB129, which would create a health equity measures advisory committee. This committee would identify health disparities based on race, gender identity, and other characteristics.

TRAC is a Maryland-based and entirely trans-led coalition committed to ensuring that all transgender and gender-expansive Marylanders can live safe and affirming lives. Our membership includes healthcare providers, attorneys, academics, organizers and other community members who all stand in strong support for creating greater safety for trans communities in Maryland.

This bill is an important step forward in addressing the health disparities experienced by Maryland's transgender communities. According to the Center for American Progress, 54% of transgender adults report having had poor physical health at least one day in the past month compared with 36% of cisgender adults.<sup>1</sup> Transgender individuals also have higher rates of many chronic health issues. For example, 22% of transgender adults report having asthma compared with 14% of cisgender adults.<sup>2</sup> These findings are alarming, and we applaud the effort to reduce these disparities.

This bill would also help address barriers to care. According to one study, nearly a third of transgender individuals have experienced health care discrimination.<sup>3</sup> Transgender individuals are also less likely to be able to afford healthcare, with nonbinary people being almost 50% more likely to forgo a health care visit due to cost.<sup>4</sup> Our members have seen these disparities firsthand. Maryland does not yet have enough culturally competent providers to meet demand. Many in the transgender community have difficulty accessing

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<sup>1</sup> Center for American Progress, *Fact Sheet: Protecting and Advancing Health Care for Transgender Adult Communities* (Aug. 25, 2021), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/fact-sheet-protecting-advancing-health-care-transgender-adult-communities/>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Axenya Kachen & Jennifer Pharr, *Health Care Access and Utilization by Transgender Populations: A United States Transgender Survey Study*, *Transgender Health* 2020 Sep. 2;5(3):141-148, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7906231/>.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

medically necessary care, both for gender-affirming care and for medical care unrelated to gender identity. For example, it is extremely difficult for transgender people to access certain types of gender-affirming care, such as electrolysis, even when their health insurance covers it. We look forward to the creation of a commission that can shed light on these issues and create redress for the health disparities currently seen in Maryland.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB129.

Sincerely,  
The Trans Rights Advocacy Coalition