



January 30, 2025

House Bill 381

Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Required Coverage for Aesthetic Services and Restorative Care for Victims of Domestic Violence (Healing Our Scars Act)
House Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 381 requires 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 aesthetic services and restorative care determined to be medically necessary for the treatment of physical injuries caused by domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive behavior that includes repeated battering and injury, psychological abuse, sexual assault, social isolation, deprivation, and intimidation.¹ To help survivors rebuild their lives and break the cycle of violence, access to aesthetic services and restorative care is essential for fostering healing and boosting self-esteem by addressing the physical reminders of past trauma. This bill focuses on facilitating the physical healing of injuries resulting from domestic violence. Survivors should have the opportunity to heal without being constantly reminded of their trauma through visible scars or injuries. Seeing these reminders in the mirror or facing questions from others can hinder emotional recovery. By addressing outward physical injuries, survivors can take critical steps toward emotional and psychological healing.

Survivors who show strength and resilience by seeking care deserve support, not additional barriers, to access the services they need. Aesthetic and restorative care that is medically

¹ <https://facialplastics.com/our-practice/philanthropy/national-domestic-violence/#:~:text=The%20American%20Academy%20of%20Facial,esteem%20and%20rebuild%20their%20lives.>

necessary to address trauma can play a significant role in the healing process. These services provide more than physical repair—they offer survivors a chance to reclaim their dignity and confidence. As human beings created in God’s image and likeness, we have a responsibility to support our brothers and sisters as they seek healing from violence inflicted upon them. Pope Francis reminds us of the urgency of this work, stating, “Faced with the scourge of physical and psychological abuse of women, there is an urgent need to rediscover just, and equitable relationship patterns based on respect and mutual recognition.”² By alleviating the financial burden of medically necessary aesthetic and restorative care, we can ensure that survivors are not further burdened as they recover. This legislation reflects our collective responsibility to walk alongside survivors of domestic violence, providing the support and resources they need to heal fully—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 381**.

Thank you for your consideration.

² <https://capp-usa.org/amoris-laetitia/>