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The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
House Health and Government Operations Committee
241 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

IN SUPPORT OF

HOUSE BILL #743: Public Health - Health Care Quality Fund for
Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs - Establishment

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender community power-building organization for Maryland's trans community. Equitable access to healthcare is a core belief of ours, and we believe that this bill will provide much-needed funding for various initiatives designed to improve the quality of behavioral healthcare in Maryland, especially for transgender individuals, who are much more likely to face significant health disparities.

Establishing a community-based behavioral health fund ensures that the mental health and wellness of Maryland's most vulnerable communities won't be neglected for reasons such as socioeconomic status or zip code. Enhancing the quality of behavioral healthcare builds more resilient and supportive communities, and those who receive appropriate care are better equipped to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives. Inclusive, equitable, and accessible healthcare benefits all Maryland residents, and this fund will support community-based practices where transgender people feel safe, respected, understood, and empowered in their well-being, and where the care provided is tailored and culturally competent.

Establishing this fund will also allow for better data collection on the effectiveness of behavioral health programs. Trans Maryland and other advocacy groups can use this data to push for further policy changes and improvements in the fields of healthcare and healthcare coverage.

For this reason, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 743.