



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 10, 2026

House Bill 341
Maryland Commission for Boys' and Men's Health - Establishment
House Health 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 341 requires the Maryland Commission for Boys' and Men's Health in the Maryland Department of Health; providing the purpose of the Commission is to raise public awareness of health issues specific to boys and men, including prostate and testicular cancer, oral cancer, cardiovascular disease, depression, diabetes, and substance use disorders; and requiring the Commission to submit a report every 2 years beginning in 2028, to the Governor and certain committees of the General Assembly, with recommendations for certain policy changes.

Men, on average, die nearly five years earlier than women, a disparity driven in part by lower rates of preventive care and delayed medical attention.¹ These challenges are especially acute for Black and Hispanic men, who face persistent health inequities and structural barriers to care. In Maryland, life expectancy for Black men is 71.8 years, compared to 77.1 years for white men.²

House Bill 341 affirms human dignity by addressing these disparities through a health-equity framework that recognizes every person's right to timely, appropriate, and preventive care. By establishing a dedicated commission, the State can develop targeted strategies to expand access to screenings and preventive services, address leading causes of death such as heart disease, cancer, and unintentional injury, and strengthen mental health and substance use

¹ <https://marincityclinic.org/mens-health-matters/>

² <https://marylandmatters.org/2022/10/26/maryland-life-expectancy-data-highlights-racial-disparities/#:~:text=82.7%20years%20respectively,->

[,Baltimore%20City%20and%20Cecil%20County%20had%20the%20lowest%2C%2071.8%20and,%2C%20Somerset%2C%20and%20Cecil](https://marylandmatters.org/2022/10/26/maryland-life-expectancy-data-highlights-racial-disparities/#:~:text=82.7%20years%20respectively,-)

supports. This focus is especially critical given that men are approximately four times more likely than women to die by suicide, highlighting the need for intentional outreach and stigma reduction.

By promoting prevention, early intervention, healthy behaviors, and culturally responsive care, this legislation works to protect life, reduce avoidable suffering, and ensure that boys and men—particularly those in historically marginalized communities—are not left behind. In doing so, House Bill 341 advances health equity as a concrete expression of human dignity. As Pope Leo reminds us, “a society is healthy and truly progresses only when it safeguards the sanctity of human life and works actively to promote it.”³

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 341**.

Thank you for your consideration.

³ <https://www.osvnews.com/pope-leo-sends-warm-greetings-apostolic-blessing-to-march-for-life-participants/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CIndeed%2C%20%27a%20society%20is,Follow%20her%20on%20X%20@GinaJesseReina>