



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

Bill Title: Public Health – Universal Health Care Program – Study and Commission

Bill Number(s): HB1316

Position: FAVORABLE

Date: March 10, 2026

Submitted by: Jeremy Browning, Director of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

To:

House Health Committee

The Hon. Heather Bagnall, Chair
The Hon. Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair

Testimony on behalf of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs:

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs respectfully submits this testimony in support of House Bill 1316.

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs was established by the General Assembly to assess the challenges facing LGBTQIA+ Marylanders, collect data, and provide recommendations to the Executive and Legislative branches of State government to advance equity and inclusion.

House Bill 1316 would require the Hilltop Institute at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County to conduct a comprehensive study on the feasibility of establishing a universal health care program through a single-payer system in Maryland and establish an advisory commission to assist in developing recommendations.

The Commission supports this effort because access to affordable, affirming health care remains a significant barrier for many LGBTQIA+ Marylanders.

In February 2026, the Commission adopted its [Maryland LGBTQIA+ Community Needs Assessment Preliminary Findings Report](#), the first statewide survey of LGBTQIA+ adults conducted by the Commission. The survey collected over 1,200 responses from LGBTQIA+ Marylanders representing all 24 jurisdictions in the state.

The findings highlight:

- More than **47% of respondents reported experiencing obstacles or delays in receiving health care in Maryland.**
- **36% reported sometimes avoiding medical care due to anticipated discrimination, and an additional 13% reported always avoiding care for this reason.**
- Respondents identified particular barriers to **mental health services, gender-affirming care, and specialty care.**
- Over **22% of respondents reported seriously considering suicide in the past 12 months**, and more than **61% reported experiencing suicidal ideation at some point in their lives.**

These findings reinforce what public health research has consistently shown: when individuals face barriers to care or fear discrimination within health systems, they are less likely to seek preventative and routine services, which can lead to poorer health outcomes.

Many LGBTQIA+ Marylanders experience gaps between legal protections and real-world access to services. Evaluating strategies that could expand access, improve equity, and reduce administrative barriers is an important step in addressing those gaps.

Studying how health care systems can be structured to reduce disparities, expand access to care, and ensure coverage regardless of income or status aligns directly with the State's broader goals of improving health equity.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1316.

Thank you for your consideration.

Reference:

Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. (2026). *Maryland LGBTQIA+ Community Needs Assessment: Preliminary Findings Report* (in partnership with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore).