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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0341, "Maryland Commission for Boys' and Men's Health – Establishment"

February 6, 2026

TO: Honorable Chair Heather Bagnall, Vice Chair Bonnie Cullison, and members of the Health Committee

FROM: Shiwei Cheng

Chair Bagnall and members of the committee, my name is Shiwei Cheng. I am writing as a volunteer member of [University of Maryland Boy's and Men's Health Collaborative](#), a master's student of social work, a mother of boys, and a concerned community member.

Maryland is home to approximately three million boys and men¹. With nearly 40% between the ages of 35 and 64 years old¹, this group represents a substantial share of the state's workforce and family-supporting population. A significant number of MD men experience poor health outcomes that create barriers to individual, family, and community health, as well as the state's economic stability. High rates of chronic disease, deaths by suicide and overdose, and homelessness¹ contribute to persistent disparities affecting communities across the state.

Maryland engages residents through more than 600 state boards and commissions to inform policy and advance community priorities. This form of advocacy is essential to advancing public health. [Establishing a Maryland Commission for Boys' and Men's Health](#) would provide a data-driven, coordinated policy mechanism to improve outcomes, advance equity, and reduce costs.

There is a need for targeted, evidence-based interventions to promote health equity, strengthen families, and improve life expectancy for boys and men in Maryland, particularly those who face the most severe health disparities. Negative health outcomes in boys and men have repercussions on the communities to which they belong. Boys' and men's health is not just an issue targeting boys and men—it's a family issue, a community issue, a social issue, a public health issue.

I urge you to support HB341 and pave the way for a practical and cost-effective mechanism to improve health outcomes, advance equity, and strengthen families and communities.

¹ Maryland Department of Health (2023). *Vital Statistics Annual Report*.

https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Reports%20and%20Data/Annual%20Reports/REV_2023_Annual%20Report_Final_v1025_Website.pdf