



MARIAN HOUSE

Women Moving from Dependence to Independence

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1476

**Independent Oversight and Review Board for Health Care of Inmates in
State Correctional Facilities-Establishment**

*TO: Chairman Luke Clippinger, Madame Chair Vanessa Atterbeary and Members of the House
Judiciary Committee*

FROM: Katie Allston, Executive Director

DATE: February 28, 2020

Marian House was founded over 37 years ago by my Sisters and laywomen in response to the dire circumstances women faced as they transitioned out of incarceration. These founding women established Marian House as a women-only, safe, stable, and supportive environment for women to go after incarceration, help reduce recidivism rates, and help women achieve their goals and overcome the specific barriers they face.

At Marian House, we serve a complex, high-need population that have experienced many forms of trauma, including incarceration, substance use, violence, homelessness, poverty, abuse, neglect, and more. Marian House aims to continually provide holistic care that treats the whole person, taking into account, their specified, varied needs and past trauma they have experienced. Effective medical, mental, and dental treatment plays a vital role in addressing poor health outcomes for incarcerated individuals. We've seen first-hand many women exit incarceration and in addition to the barriers and challenges they face in order to rebuild their lives and transition back into the community, these previously incarcerated individuals also face a multitude of health concerns that usually need urgent care and attention.

Inadequate and improper provision of healthcare for this population causes serious poor health outcomes, increases recidivism/victimization, has the greatest impact on release and re-entry, negatively impacts our communities and has serious legal implications. With the number of people incarcerated due to mental health and substance use disorders being extremely high and the lack of healthcare causing the numbers of individuals with chronic illnesses leading to permanent disability to dramatically rise, it is imperative that independent oversight and regulation is implemented to begin to correct this historic and massive problem. It is how we will best serve incarcerated individuals and ensure that they are not further punished, but rather, supported and treated with dignity.. On behalf of the women we serve at Marian House, I respectfully urge you to take the call to action in **SUPPORT of HB1476**.

Thank you for your support,

Katie Allston, LCSW-C
Executive Director