



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

HB 1082: Public Health- Consumer Health Information- Hub and Requirements

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng, President

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The League of Women Voters supports **House Bill 1082: Consumer Health Information Hub and Requirements**, which would improve health literacy and thus strengthen public health and health equity.

The pandemic has clearly shown that **access to accurate, effective health information can be life-saving.**

But health information needs to be presented in a clear, understandable, and culturally-sensitive way in order to be effective. It should be written in plain language- whether it's discharge instructions after a procedure, instructions on how to follow a diabetic diet, or what to watch for when taking a new medication. It is a patient right to make choices about treatment, and it is a responsibility of the health care provider to supply the information needed to make those choices. Effective communication is essential. Misunderstanding health information can be dangerous, and can lead to poor health outcomes.

The League of Women Voters has long been an advocate for patient rights. In the 1990's The League of Women Voters developed a comprehensive position supporting a healthcare system that provides access to affordable, quality healthcare for all U.S. residents, and which **includes health promotion and education and the protection of patients' rights.**

Having access to understandable health information is a matter of patient rights, and is especially important for those who are not comfortable with the healthcare system, or have had bad experiences with it.

A goal under Maryland's Total Cost of Care Model is to improve population health and reduce health care disparities. The Consumer Health Information Hub, as established by House Bill 1082, will provide tools and resources healthcare providers and

government agencies need to communicate effectively with patients and the public, thus improving public health and health outcomes.

The League urges the committee to give a favorable report to House Bill 1082.