



February 4th, 2022

Testimony of Laura Hale
American Heart Association

Support of SB244 Maryland Medical Assistance Program- Self Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman and Members of the Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee today. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association. The American Heart Association extends its strong support for Senate Bill 244.

Nationally, nearly 1 in 2 U.S. adults have hypertension, yet only about 1 in 4 have it under control¹. In Maryland, an estimated 700,000 Marylanders with hypertension also known as high blood pressure do not have their high blood pressure under control, which puts them at an increased risk of many serious health conditions². Too many Marylanders struggle with hypertension. In addition, those on Medicaid have additional burdens that can make management of hypertension even more difficult. This legislation begins to bridge the gap for those with Medicaid who struggle to control their hypertension; going beyond a blood pressure device by adding clinical support in managing their high blood pressure.

The research literature has shown that, when combined with additional clinical support, Self-Measured Blood Pressure (SMBP) is effective in reducing hypertension, improving patient knowledge, improving the health system process, and enhancing medication adherence³. At the end of the day, this means that people are living longer and healthier lives by managing their blood pressure at home with clinical support.

The healthier lives that participants in Medicaid will have from the state's investment in SMBP will ultimately lead to cost savings in the future. The fiscal note details this investment but fails to account for the cost savings that will occur through having a healthier population. This legislation is a key investment for our most at risk population.

Currently, Marylanders are only getting part of the picture and we need to make sure that they have the support they need in order to control their blood pressure. The American Heart Association urges a favorable report on SB 244.

¹ Ritchey MD, Gillespie C, Wozniak G, Shay CM, Thompson-Paul AM, Loustalot F, Hong Y. Potential need for expanded pharmacologic treatment and lifestyle modification services under the 2017 ACC/ AHA Hypertension Guideline. *J Clin Hypertens (Greenwich)*. 2018 Oct;20(10):1377–91

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. High Blood Pressure Fact Sheet. http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsdp/data_statistics/fact_sheets/docs/fs_bloodpressure.pdf 03/25/16

³ Uhlig K, Patel K, Ip S, Kitsios GD, Balk EM. Self-measured blood pressure monitoring in the management of hypertension: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Ann Intern Med*. 2013;159(3):185–194.