



March 7, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 1137 – SUPPORT

Dear Madame Speaker,

I am pleased to support House Bill 1137, and to emphasize the importance of CT Scanning for Calcium Score Testing, for early detection in cardiovascular disease.

While I am the CEO of WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease, I am also a woman living with a recently-diagnosed cardiovascular disease. This diagnosis came after rushing nine times to the Emergency Department, each time coming away with a variety of discharge instructions – from follow up with a cardiologist to stress and anxiety. I persevered, and finally, on the ninth visit, had a proactive ER doctor who asked me what I needed him to write on my discharge papers. That allowed me to see a cardiologist who I knew would believe me, would listen to my story and be a partner to arrive at a treatable diagnosis.

Both in my capacity as a cardiology patient as well as the CEO of WomenHeart, I wholeheartedly support House Bill 1137. Having a standardized and consistently implemented CT screening for Calcium Score Testing would help people like me to get answers for the possible causes for symptoms such as chest, arm and neck pain, shortness of breath, extreme fatigue, and nausea.

House Bill 1137 would require Maryland Medical Assistance Program and insurers, nonprofit health plans, health, health maintenance organizations, and managed care organizations to provide coverage for calcium score testing for individuals who have at least three of the following risk factors:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Family history of premature coronary artery disease

According to the Center for Disease Control, someone dies from heart disease every 33 seconds, making heart disease the leading cause of death in the United States. By passing HB 1137, it would reduce the mortality rate of heart disease, leading to a path towards greater health equity.

Regards,

Celina Gorre, MPA, MPH
Chief Executive Officer
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease