



*Open My Heart*  
FOUNDATION

*Eliminating Heart Health Disparities Among  
African American Women and Women of Color*

March 7, 2024

*Submitted electronically:*

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/MyMGATracking/WitnessSignup>

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,

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

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 Centers for Disease Control (CDC), someone dies from heart disease every 33 seconds, making heart disease the leading cause of death in the United States. The CDC additionally reports that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the state of Maryland killing 11,653 in 2017. By detecting Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) early, it can prevent untimely deaths and reduce hospitalizations, for individuals who are at high risk of developing CAD. By passing this bill, it would reduce the mortality rate of heart disease, leading to a path towards greater health equity.

Regards,

Dr. Florence Champagne, CEO  
Open My Heart Foundation, Inc.

Dr. Paul Underwood, Vice Chair  
Open My Heart Foundation

Continued:

Association of Black Cardiologists

WomenHeart

Quality of Life Pharmacy

Maryland Department of Health

National Congress of Black Women

Sisters 4 Sisters Network, Inc.

The League of Women Voters of Prince George's County

Howard University School of Social Work