



Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association

To the Senate Finance Committee

Chair: Senator Pamela Beidle

January 28, 2025

Senate Bill 94: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, Senator Ellis, and members of the Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 94: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Maryland while diabetes and kidney disease both rank high as 7th and 10th leading causes, respectively (National Center for Health Statistics, 2024). Hypertension, a major contributing factor to heart disease, is estimated to affect 1.5 million Marylanders (BRFSS Brief, 2017). Moreover, in Maryland, 11.9% of adults have a diabetes diagnosis and 3.7% have a chronic kidney disease diagnosis (America's Health Rankings, 2023). Senate Bill 94 encourages Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring which is an important strategy in improving health and outcomes for Maryland residents. Self-monitoring improves control of blood pressure through increased compliance by giving patients an active role in their own health (NIH). Moreover, self-monitoring can prevent hospital visits, reducing the burden of healthcare costs (NIH).

People living below the poverty line have a higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension (Tawakol et al., 2019). In Maryland, rural areas have a 12.1% poverty rate, higher than the state-wide rate of 9.3% (Economic Research Service, 2024). Thus, by the requiring coverage of and education on self-measured blood pressure monitoring through the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, this bill is likely to have a considerable impact on the health and livelihood of rural residents in Maryland. MRHA believes this legislation is important to support our rural communities and we urge the Committee to support SB94.

*On behalf of the Maryland Rural Health Association,
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