

January 24, 2025

Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 94
Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring

Honorable Chair and Members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee,

I am providing this written testimony to express my strong support of Senate Bill 94, which seeks to expand access to self-measured blood pressure monitoring for Medicaid recipients in Maryland. I am a public health nurse and nurse researcher in the area of maternal health equity with first-hand experience caring for pregnant and postpartum people in Maryland.

There is an urgent need to address hypertensive disorders in pregnancy to reduce maternal mortality and combat racial disparities. Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy affect up to 10% of pregnancies. They are the leading causes of death in the postpartum period and the greatest contributors of Black-White disparities in maternal mortality. Furthermore, women who experience hypertensive disorders of pregnancy are at increased risk for postpartum hospital readmission as well as persistent hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and stroke later in life.

Research has found that remote home blood pressure monitoring approaches are effective. A systematic review of the evidence published in *Obstetrics & Gynecology* (Steele, 2023) concluded that home blood pressure monitoring improves blood pressure ascertainment, helps address racial disparities, and may reduce hospital admissions related to high blood pressure.

As a co-investigator on the HRSA-funded Maryland Maternal Health Innovation Program (MDMOM), I can speak firsthand to the demand for and satisfaction with home blood pressure monitoring for pregnant people. MDMOM currently distributes blood pressure cuffs to pregnant people with hypertensive disorders in 27 of the 32 birthing hospitals across the state. Through this program, approximately 15 cuffs per day are distributed and both patients and providers express high levels of satisfaction with the program. Senate Bill 94 would ensure that all pregnant Medicaid recipients who need a blood pressure cuff can access one, even after MDMOM program funding has expired.

As a healthcare professional deeply committed to this work, I urge the Maryland General Assembly to pass Senate Bill 94. By enacting this legislation to help reduce maternal mortality, address health inequities, and improving long-term cardiovascular health outcomes for childbearing people. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue and for your leadership in advancing maternal health equity in Maryland.

Respectfully,



Kelly Bower, PhD, MSN/MPH, RN, FAAN
Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing
Associate Director, Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute

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