

February 13, 2020
The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
241 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

SUPPORT

HB 852 Health Insurance – Prostate Cancer Screening – Prohibiting Cost Sharing

Dear Chairman Pendergrass:

My name is Patrice Brown and I'm here before you today not only as a representative of ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer -- the nation's leading nonprofit in the fight to end this deadly disease -- but as someone who almost lost a family member to this awful illness. I am here in full support of HB 852, which would prohibit burdensome and unnecessary cost-sharing for prostate cancer screening.

For more than two decades, ZERO has advanced research, improved the lives of thousands of men and families around the country, and inspired action. I was called to my work as ZERO's Vice President of Patient Programs and Advocacy out of my desire to prevent any other families from the emotional devastation of prostate cancer. It is for my uncle's livelihood that I fight for patients and their families every day. And he is just one of the many men whose lives were ultimately saved through early detection.

In 2012, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force assigned the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test a "D" rating. This meant that the USPSTF concluded the harms of this simple blood test, such as negative treatment side effects, outweighed the benefits of finding and managing the disease early -- despite a 99% chance of survival if the disease is caught in early stages.

The Task Force recommendation is important as it guides primary care physicians in preventive care and can impact insurance coverage and reimbursement for screening. Thankfully, in May 2018, the Task Force updated its recommendation on PSA screening. PSA screening was elevated to a "C" rating -- I tell the patients I come in contact with every day that this means "C" your doctor for a PSA test.

But like many medical tests, medical costs and fees can add up. No patient should be deterred from receiving a lifesaving test due to cost, and that's why I'm before you today, asking that you protect patients from unnecessary fees that could cost them their lives.

Prostate cancer will be the most diagnosed cancer among men in Maryland in 2020 -- so much so that it'll be diagnosed at a rate nearly double of the next most prevalent cancer for men in the state (lung and bronchus). The right to health should be inherent, and a government should financially protect those seeking effective healthcare. I invite Maryland to make history by becoming the second state in the nation committed to protecting the rights and wallets of prostate cancer patients.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 852. I urge your support of HB 852, to save the lives of men like my uncle.

Sincerely,
Patrice Brown
Vice President of Patient Programs and Advocacy,
ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer

