

Chesapeake UROLOGY

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February 7, 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:

As a practicing urologist in Maryland, I am asking for your support for HB 852 to eliminate cost sharing for prostate cancer screening with the PSA blood test. Urology is the specialty that diagnoses and treats most forms of prostate cancer, and currently ~90% of my patients either have or have had prostate cancer. As with any cancer, early detection is key, but this is particularly true in prostate cancer, as there is a 99% 10 year survival for men discovered with localized disease versus a less than 30% survival with men found to have metastatic disease. Most cancer screening occurs in the primary care environment. The PSA test is the primary screening tool used to find almost all cases of prostate cancer. Easy access to this simple blood test is essential to finding this cancer at a stage where management is likely to be successful.

Chesapeake Urology is the largest provider of urologic care in Maryland, and in 2018, almost 2,500 Marylanders were diagnosed with prostate cancer within our practice. We have seen the effect of decreased use of the PSA test on our patients. In the past 7 years, we have seen the number of patients presenting to us with incurable prostate cancer increase over 60%, representing an additional 100+ men/year. Treatment of patients at this stage is often more difficult on the patient and is certainly more costly. Removing any obstacles for patients to have effective prostate cancer screening with the PSA test will save the lives of Maryland men.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, and I urge your support of HB 852.

Sincerely,



Benjamin Lowentritt, MD, FACS
Medical Director, Chesapeake Urology Comprehensive Prostate Cancer Program
President, Mid-Atlantic Section of the American Urological Association
Medical Advisory Board Member – Zero – The End of Prostate Cancer