



Committee: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 488 - Sales and Use Tax - Medical Devices - Exemption

Hearing Date: February 15, 2022

Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *Senate Bill 488 – Sales and Use Tax – Medical Devices – Exemption*. The bill would create a sales tax exemption for medical and clinical thermometers, pulse oximeters, and blood pressure monitors.

Maryland already exempts many other medical products, such as over-the-counter medications, breastfeeding supplies, eyeglasses, crutches, and batteries for hearing aids from the sales tax. This legislation recognizes the importance of medical equipment that patients use at home in chronic disease management.

With the expansion of the use of telehealth, patients are more often at home for their clinical appointments, so at-home equipment has become more important. This equipment is often not covered by insurance. Eliminating the sales tax for equipment, such as blood pressure monitors, will make it more affordable for Marylanders and encourage its use.

Clinical studies support the effectiveness of at-home monitoring. For example, when patients have at-home blood pressure monitoring equipment and counseling by their providers, their blood pressure metrics improve within the same year and continue to improve in the long-term.ⁱ For this reason, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended this strategy to prevent heart disease and stroke.ⁱⁱ

SB 488 will help make essential at-home medical equipment more affordable for Marylanders. We urge a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ Bryant et al. Impact of Self-Monitoring of Blood Pressure on Processes of Hypertension Care and Long-Term Blood Pressure Control. *Journal of the American Heart Association*. 2020;9:e016174

ⁱⁱ <https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/pubs/guides/best-practices/smbp.htm>