



NAACP

Maryland
STATE CONFERENCE

March 8, 2024

Health and Government Operations
Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: HB 1259 – Breast and Lung Cancer Screening – Coverage Requirements

Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express the support of the Maryland NAACP for House Bill 1259, sponsored by Delegate Alston. This bill is a step towards addressing health disparities in our communities, particularly among people of color, by expanding coverage for vital medical procedures and ensuring equitable access to preventive healthcare services.

House Bill 1259 aims to include image-guided breast biopsy in the definition of "supplemental breast examination" for the purpose of certain provisions of law requiring insurers, health service plans, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for supplemental breast examinations. Additionally, the bill clarifies that coverage requirements for lung cancer screening apply to follow-up diagnostic imaging.

Breast cancer and lung cancer are two of the most prevalent and deadly forms of cancer, and they disproportionately impact communities of color. Access to timely and accurate diagnostic procedures, such as image-guided breast biopsy, is crucial for early detection and effective treatment. Unfortunately, many individuals, particularly those from marginalized communities, face barriers to accessing these essential services due to financial constraints or lack of insurance coverage.

Breast cancer disproportionately affects people of color, imposing a heavier burden on communities already facing systemic health disparities. African American and Hispanic women are more likely to be diagnosed with aggressive forms of breast cancer at later stages, leading to poorer outcomes compared to their white counterparts. Factors such as limited access to healthcare, lower rates of screening and early detection, socioeconomic inequalities, and cultural barriers contribute to this disparity. Moreover, once diagnosed, people of color often face additional challenges in accessing high-quality treatment and support services. Addressing these disparities requires targeted efforts to improve healthcare access, raise awareness, and provide culturally competent care to ensure equitable outcomes for all individuals affected by breast cancer.

By expanding coverage for image-guided breast biopsy and clarifying coverage requirements for follow-up diagnostic imaging, House Bill 1259 will ensure that individuals from all backgrounds have access to the life-saving screenings and procedures they need. This legislation will not only save lives but also reduce health disparities and promote health equity in our state.

The Maryland NAACP firmly believes that access to quality healthcare is a fundamental human right. No individual should be denied access to essential medical care or procedures simply because of their socioeconomic status or racial background. House Bill 1259 represents a significant step towards achieving health equity in Maryland and ensuring that all residents have the opportunity to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

We urge you to support House Bill 1259 and take a stand against health disparities in our communities. Together, we can work towards a future where every individual has access to the healthcare they need and deserve.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

In Service,

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