

February 3, 2025

Re: SB 374 - Health Insurance – Cancer Screening for Professional Firefighters – Required Coverage

(James “Jimmy” Malone Act)

Position: **Support**

Chairwoman Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Jamie McIntosh. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 374, requiring certain health insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage without the requirement for copayment, coinsurance, or deductible to professional firefighters for cancer screening in accordance with certain guidelines; and requiring the Secretary of Budget and Management and certain counties and municipalities to ensure that certain employee health benefit plans comply with coverage requirements for professional firefighters.

I am a professional firefighter who has cancer. Although it was not guaranteed at the time, in 2017, I was lucky enough to have been the beneficiary of early testing which found anomalies in my blood values that, after several months of further testing, were ultimately determined to be caused by Hairy Cell Leukemia. This early screening not only allowed me to receive treatment earlier in the progression of my disease, but also protected me while I was working before my treatment began.

It's difficult for me to think about what might have happened if my cancer had not been discovered early. My White Blood Count was low. My Absolute Neutrophil Count was low. My Platelet level was low.

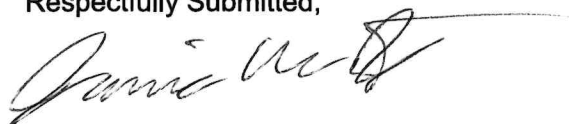
Low White Blood counts and low Absolute Neutrophil counts cause a decreased immune response when exposed to disease. As a professional firefighter, I am constantly exposed to diseases on emergency medical responses. If I had not known about my decreased blood counts, I could have easily contracted a normally benign disease that could have caused serious illness or even death.

Platelets are the substances in the blood that promote clotting. With a decreased Platelet level, I was at risk for significant bleeding from a small cut. It would have been even worse if I had another serious injury at work, which required emergency surgery.

Early screening provided me with the best opportunity to remain healthy and continue my career serving the residents of Anne Arundel County as a professional firefighter.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report for Senate Bill 374.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jamie McIntosh", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.