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February 6, 2025

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

House Bill 666 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Required Coverage for Calcium Score Testing

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk,

The League of Life and Health Insurers of Maryland, Inc. respectfully **opposes** *House Bill 666 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Required Coverage for Calcium Score Testing* and urges the committee to give the bill an unfavorable report.

The League and our members are committed to finding ways that all screenings and preventive care can be covered when appropriate, but we unfortunately cannot support this particular approach.

The legislation provides an example of limited, low value care at fairly significant potential expense for the following reasons: First, it appears there is no exception for patient with defined coronary disease. Since calcium scoring is only useful in primary prevention the absence of restriction for patients with existing coronary disease would be considered harmful (*since it is exposure to radiation without any possibility of benefit to the patient*).

Second, the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association guidelines, and the supporting evidence, only support calcium scoring for patients with moderate Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease risk scores who don't have a compelling indication for statin. This is due to the fact that since it's only value is in adjudicating statin use for moderate risk patients. Several of the criteria in Senate Bill 60, such as diabetes, invoked would be independent indications for statins and so would obviate the need for calcium scoring. Third, the proposed legislation appears to make no exceptions for alternate identifiers of risk like atherosclerosis of the aorta – which is equivalent to

coronary calcium in term of predicting primary risk, and is a tool physicians use in their evaluation systems to identify risk on incidental studies. Finally, compelling calcium scoring without a shared decision-making model is at odds with guidelines and ethical provider standards.

For these reasons, the League urges the committee to give House Bill 666 an unfavorable report since it appears to put patients at risk and increase costs without clear benefit.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Celentano", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Celentano
Executive Director

cc: Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee