



TESTIMONY TO THE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

HB 666: Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance- Required Coverage for Calcium Score Testing

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters believes that every Maryland resident should have access to affordable, equitable, quality health care, which includes the prevention of disease and health promotion and education.

Heart disease is the number one cause of death in Maryland,¹ and 3.4% of Maryland adults have experienced a heart attack at some point in their lives. The symptoms of coronary artery disease (CAD) -- the leading cause of heart disease -- are variable. They range from the well-recognized medical emergency of crushing chest pain, to non-specific symptoms such as fatigue, light-headedness, or indigestion, which can have many causes. Due to this variability of symptoms, a medical provider can miss the signs of progressive angina in their patient, and thus sometimes the first diagnosis of coronary artery disease is made when that patient presents to the Emergency Room in cardiac arrest.

HB 666 would require the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and other health insurers to provide coverage for calcium score testing for Marylanders who have at least three risk factors for heart disease. This would enable those high-risk patients who are non-symptomatic, or whose symptoms have not yet been attributed to CAD, to undergo a brief, non-invasive, inexpensive imaging study to measure their risk for a potentially fatal heart attack. If their calcium score is high, they can quickly be started on medications and other treatments to significantly lower their risk of death and disability.

The cost savings of preventative healthcare have been well documented, and providing coverage for this potentially life-saving test would be an important step in reducing the financial and human costs of heart disease in Maryland. The League of Women Voters and its 1,500+ members urge the committee to give a favorable report to House Bill 666.

¹<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/ccdpc/heart/Pages/about.aspx#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Maryland%20Behavioral,a%20stroke%20at%20some%20point>