

February 5, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk

Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee

240 Taylor House Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 553: Maryland Medical Assistance Program- Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk:

I am writing in support of HB553, to promote self-measured blood pressure monitoring in Maryland. This bill requires the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to cover blood pressure monitoring devices for eligible recipients. Furthermore, the Program will develop an informational campaign to educate recipients about the benefits of blood pressure monitoring for hypertensive individuals. Equally important, data will be collected concerning the impact of self-measured blood pressure, and annual reports will be published beginning in December 2027.

This bill is of vital importance to the health of many Maryland residents. If successfully implemented, this blood pressure monitoring strategy will improve health outcomes for those who participate in this initiative. Currently, Maryland's Medical Assistance Program spends over \$196 million each year for the management of hypertension.¹ Hypertension is a prevalent condition among Maryland adults, affecting over one-third of this population. The data collection component of this bill will help medical professionals assess the impact of this program.

We, the members of the Community Coalition for Lifelong Health and Wellness (CCLHW) support HBA553, as an important initiative to strengthen community health, and we believe it will improve health outcomes for Marylanders diagnosed with hypertension.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Arti Varanasi', with a stylized, flowing script.

Arti Varanasi, PhD. MPH, CPH
President & CEO, Advancing Synergy

On behalf of the [Community Coalition for Lifelong Health and Wellness \(CCLHW\) Founding Partners](#): Advancing Synergy, BE Rehab Services, Care for Your Health, CASA, Community Engagement and Consulting Group (CE-CG), Community FarmShare

¹ Maryland Area Health Education Center (MAHEC), The Burden of Chronic Disease in Maryland, University of Maryland School of Medicine, <https://www.medschool.umaryland.edu/mahec/health-disparities/the-burden-of-chronic-disease-in-maryland/#:~:text=Defined%20as%20high%20blood%20pressure,affects%20the%20African%20American%20population>