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WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 27, 2025

To: Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express our unanimous support for **HB1087: Health Insurance - Step Therapy or Fail-First Protocols - Drugs to Treat Associated Conditions of Advanced Metastatic Cancer**. This critical legislation is essential in ensuring that Marylanders battling stage four metastatic cancer receive timely, effective treatment without unnecessary barriers that could jeopardize their health and well-being.

As you are aware, metastatic cancer patients face significant challenges in accessing appropriate and life-sustaining treatments. Step therapy or fail-first protocols, which require patients to try and fail on insurer-preferred medications before accessing the treatment initially recommended by their provider, can have devastating consequences for individuals with late-stage cancer. For Maryland women and families impacted by metastatic cancer, delays in receiving the right medication can result in worsening conditions, unnecessary suffering, and reduced survival rates. HB1087 eliminates this harmful delay by ensuring that prescribed medications aligned with best practices can be accessed immediately when deemed necessary by the treating provider.

Cancer treatment is not one-size-fits-all, and for many patients—particularly women—treatment must be tailored to individual medical histories, genetics, and unique responses to therapy. By removing the burdensome step therapy requirement for certain drugs treating metastatic cancer side effects, this bill prioritizes patient-centered care, allowing physicians to act in the best interests of their patients without interference from insurance-mandated protocols.

Additionally, HB1087 supports Maryland families caring for loved ones with stage four cancer, reducing the emotional, physical, and financial toll associated with treatment delays and insurance denials. The stress of navigating a cancer diagnosis is already overwhelming—no patient or family should be forced to battle insurance providers to access the medication that could improve their quality of life or extend survival.

For these reasons, the Maryland Women's Caucus strongly urges the Health and Government Operations Committee to issue a favorable report for HB1087. Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to protecting the health and well-being of Marylanders.