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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE



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House Bill 1364- Public Health- Mammograms- Arterial Calcification Notice

Good afternoon, Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 1364.

House Bill 1364 is a simple yet important bill that will use information found in mammograms to save lives. This bill will require notification to women in their mammogram results letter if Breast Arterial Calcification (BAC) is present in their mammogram.

BAC is the buildup of calcium in the arterial walls that can predict or discern the risk for cardiovascular disease. BAC can appear on mammograms as distinct, thin, white parallel lines or beaded, tubelike structures that resemble a “railroad” track pattern.

Although BAC frequently appears on routine mammograms, there is currently no standardized protocol for reporting this information to a patient. In addition, even when the presence of BAC is documented, reporting practices lack uniformity. This bill would provide that needed uniformity and standardize the practice of reporting the presence of BAC.

The notice required by the bill is a simple, non-alarming message informing the patient of the presence of BAC and its association with increased cardiovascular risk. It encourages follow-up with a physician to assess cardiovascular risks and determine if additional testing may be appropriate. The patient can then make an informed decision about how to proceed.

The notification approach taken in this bill has proven to be effective. In 2013, the Health and Government Operations Committee passed legislation that required mammogram results letters to include information related to dense breast tissue. This bill builds upon that model which has been providing valuable health care information to women in Maryland for over 10 years.

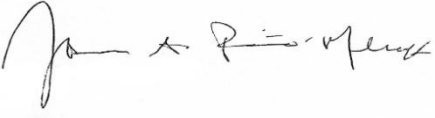
Knowledge is power. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States, and the person-centered knowledge about increased risk provided by this bill will save lives. Cardiovascular disease kills more women than all forms of cancer combined, yet we are not exhausting every method of informing women about the risks. Cardiovascular disease is preventable through lifestyle changes and education. When women are provided with information about increased cardiovascular risk, they can be proactive about the findings and take steps to live a longer healthier life.

We have met with the relevant stakeholders and worked with them to incorporate their expertise and strengthen this bill. Those stakeholders included Dr. Rachel Brem, Chief Medical Officer of the Brem Foundation, radiologists, and the Maryland Department of Health.

I am offering an amendment clarifying that a provision of law regarding federal action on dense breast tissue has no effect on the notification language related to breast arterial calcification.

I respectfully ask for your support on HB 1364, and I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jaime Peña-Melnyk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke.

Delegate Peña-Melnyk