

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

February 16th, 2023

RE: House Bill 376 – FAVORABLE – Health Insurance – Diagnostic and Supplemental Examinations for Breast Cancer – Cost-Sharing

Dear Chair Griffith and Members of the Finance Committee:

I am writing in support of the legislation HB 376 – Diagnostic and Supplemental Examinations for Breast Cancer – Cost-Sharing, to eliminate out-of-pocket costs for breast cancer patients.

Screening saves lives. There has been a 40% reduction in mortality from breast cancer in the United States since the initiation of widespread screening mammography in the late 1980's. In order to save lives and decrease medical expenses, we must find breast cancer early at its most curable stages and be able to act on these findings.

My job as a breast imaging specialist includes looking for findings on screening mammograms suspicious for breast cancer and to pursue these findings with further evaluation as needed by additional mammographic views, ultrasound, and/or MRI, as well as biopsy to confirm the diagnosis of cancer.

Unfortunately, I have personally seen multiple patients decline or cancel the recommended studies because of the inability to pay for them. Some who eventually returned were diagnosed with cancer more advanced than would have been the case initially. More advanced cancers can lead to greater treatment costs and lower survival rates.

In addition to being a breast imaging specialist, I'm a breast cancer survivor. My own cancer was found on a screening mammogram. I was able to promptly undergo the necessary additional mammographic views and ultrasound that led to my biopsy and diagnosis of cancer. Had those additional studies been delayed and my cancer not been detected at such an early stage, I might not be here today over 20 years later.

I know the anxiety of being diagnosed with breast cancer. The addition of financial concerns at the already highly stressful diagnostic time places an even greater burden both emotionally and financially upon patients and their families.

In conclusion, I strongly support the bill sponsored by Komen, HB 376 – Diagnostic and Supplemental Examinations for Breast Cancer – Cost-Sharing, to eliminate out-of-pocket costs for breast cancer patients.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stacey J. Keen, MD, FACR