

Submitter: Sophia Bergstrom
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB451

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and members of the committee. My name is Sophia Bergstrom, and I'm writing today to share my personal story and speak in strong support of SB 451, which aims to expand access to life-saving cancer screenings by eliminating financial barriers like deductibles, co-insurance, and copayments for medically necessary diagnostic testing for cervical cancer. This ensures that an abnormal screening result doesn't become a financial burden that delays essential care.

Both my mother and grandmother were diagnosed with breast cancer, and my aunt was diagnosed with cervical cancer. And while I understand that these bills aren't regarding breast cancer, early screenings and detection were key for them. Because their cancer was caught early, they received timely treatment, and today they are all in remission. Their survival is a testament to the power of early detection, which should be accessible to everyone, regardless of their background or income.

While my family had access to these critical screenings, I recognize that many others do not. This bill follows the example of successful legislation like SB 1041, which ensured that diagnostic breast exams were accessible without out-of-pocket costs. Expanding this coverage to cervical cancer screenings is the next logical step. This bill will ensure more people can benefit from early detection, leading to better outcomes and lower healthcare costs. According to the American Cancer Society "Cervical cancer incidence rates decreased by more than half from the mid-1970s to the mid-2000s, largely because of the increased use of screening" but "Screening utilization was lowest among recent immigrants (55%), those with less than a high school education (56%), and uninsured women (58%)" We cannot afford to let preventable tragedies continue due to lack of access.

Some may worry about the cost of expanding screening programs. However, the long-term savings from early treatment, not to mention the lives saved, far outweigh these initial investments.

In closing, I urge you to support SB451. My family's story shows what early detection can do. Let's make sure that everyone has the same chance. Thank you for your time and for considering this legislation.