

Committees:

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**Sponsor Testimony- HB 371
Families, Aging and Human Services
September 30, 2021**

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, ranking member Liston and members of the Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee, we appreciate the opportunity to give sponsor testimony on HB 371.

Compared to other types of cancer, breast cancer causes one of the highest rates of cancer-related deaths among woman. Among all of the fighters that we have lost, African American woman have a breast cancer mortality rate higher than any other racial or ethnic group at 31%. White woman and black woman are among the racial and ethnic groups most effected by breast cancer. Overall, incidences of breast cancer occur in white woman at a slightly higher rate than black woman. However, the mortality rate for black women diagnosed with breast cancer is over 40% higher than that of white woman.

Improvements in follow-up of abnormal screening tests and treatment for breast cancer for Black women is critical as we work to address racial disparities. We must also empower women, specifically Black women who often feel so marginalized by the medical system. By improving the way we notify women with dense breast tissue, this bill will increase one's ability to advocate for themselves and push to receive the necessary screening. Increasing accessibility to that supplemental screening by expanding what is covered by Medicaid and commercial plans for women of all ages will allow for more women to be diagnosed and receive treatment earlier. For Black and African American women, who are more likely to be diagnosed with more aggressive types and stages of breast cancer, this is critical.

The bottom line is measures to ensure access to quality breast cancer care and the best-available treatments for all women diagnosed with breast cancer can help address racial disparities. This is a huge part of why this legislation is so important.