

May 12, 2021

The Honorable Andy Barr
U.S. House of Representatives
2430 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema
U.S. Senate
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Barr, Leader McConnell and Senator Sinema,

We are writing to express our support for the Cardiovascular Advances in Research and Opportunities Legacy (CAROL) Act (HR 1193/ S 1133). As organizations that represent and advocate for patients living with heart disease, we thank you for sponsoring this legislation to advance our understanding and awareness of heart valve disease, a condition that kills approximately 25,000 people each year.

The CAROL Act authorizes funding for the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at the NIH to conduct life-saving research on valve disease and to convene a workshop on mitral valve prolapse. This investment will help address gaps in our understanding of heart valve disease, including what causes sudden cardiac death in a small number of people, predominantly women.

The bill also invests in education efforts to broaden awareness of the risk factors and symptoms of heart valve disease and in efforts to increase screening, detection, and diagnosis of heart valve disease. According to an awareness survey, 3 out of 4 Americans report knowing little to nothing about heart valve disease. Many people living with heart valve disease, particularly women, are never diagnosed or they are diagnosed later in the course of the disease, leading to missed opportunities for treatment. Currently, there is no heart valve disease screening recommendation from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) nor is screening part of the "Welcome to Medicare" preventive visit or the yearly "Wellness" visit. It is important for both the public and clinicians to be aware of patients' risk for valve disease, to recognize the symptoms, and to have accurate and timely diagnosis. Earlier detection and diagnosis can lead to earlier treatment, before the onset of worse symptoms.

Thank you for recognizing the impact of heart valve disease on millions of people across the country, and for your leadership in advancing solutions that will improve heart health. We look forward to working with you to pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease
Alliance for Aging Research
Heart Valve Voice - US
American Heart Association (AHA)
American College of Cardiology

American College of Emergency Physicians
American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation
Association of Black Cardiologists
Baton Rouge General Medical Center
CardioStart International Inc.
CardioVisual: Heart Health App by MedicalVisual, Inc
Caregiver Action Network
HealthyWomen
Lymphatic Education & Research Network
Medical Management Associates, Inc.
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Scandic health LLC
StopAfib.org, American Foundation for Women's Health
Sustainable Cardiovascular Health Equity Development Alliance
The Pediatric & Congenital Interventional Cardiovascular Society (PICS)