

Testimony of Michael DeLong in Support of HB 1119- Pharmacists-Required Notification and Authorized Substitution- Lower Cost Brand Name Drug or Device Product

Chair Pendergrass, Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk, members of the Committee, thank you for receiving my testimony. My name is Michael DeLong, and I am a 29 year old resident of Silver Spring, in District 20. For the past several years I worked as a consumer organizer and advocate, with a particular focus on health care. During this job I learned about a great deal about rising prescription drug prices and ways to bring them down, and advocated for measures to reduce drug costs.

Several bills I supported included the CREATES Act to promote access to and development of generic drugs, measures to stop pay for delay deals between brand and generic drug companies that delay more affordable medicines, and H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, which gives Medicare the power to negotiate lower drug prices.

I would like to add my voice in support of Delegate Emily Shetty's HB 1119, an excellent bill that requires pharmacists to inform consumers if certain therapeutically equivalent brand name drugs are available and if they are more affordable. The bill also authorizes pharmacists to substitute these therapeutically equivalent brand drugs for certain prescribed brand drugs under certain circumstances.

Drug prices in America are wildly inconsistent and often change from place to place without rhyme or reason. It only makes sense that when more affordable brand drugs are available and equivalent to other brand drugs, pharmacists should be able to substitute the cheaper versions. As David Mitchell, founder and President of Patients for Affordable Drugs says, "Drugs don't work if people can't afford them."

Currently rising drug prices are a public health crisis, with prices increasing much faster than the rate of inflation. 70% of Americans say that lowering prescription drug prices should be a top priority for Congress, but legislation has failed to advance in the Senate. In the absence of meaningful action at the federal level, state legislatures can and must take action.

I thank Delegate Shetty for her work on HB 1119. While it is a first step, it will help patients get access to more affordable drugs, and it is a necessary step toward lowering drug costs. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Michael DeLong
Michaeldelong94@gmail.com
925-708-1135
8918 Whitney St
Silver Spring, MD 20901