



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Favorable

SB940- Pharmacies – Prescription Drugs – Accessible Labels for Blind, Visually Impaired, and Print Disabled Individuals

March 30, 2023

Dear Madame Chair, Senator Melanie Griffith; Vice Chair, Senator Katherine Klausmeier and Members of the Finance Committee

First, I would like to recognize that many compromises were made on both sides to get to this point of agreement. For a blind or visually impaired customer, the lack of accessible labelling could cause further illness, inappropriate dosing and even death. Currently, blind, low vision (also called visually impaired), and print disabled patients have trouble getting their prescription medication labels in a format they can read. Due to the nature of their disabilities, they cannot read standard print, which is the default for what goes on a prescription bottle. Many elderly patients also experience these challenges due to age-based vision loss. Currently, the pharmacy industry has the ability to provide prescription labels in large print, Braille, and audio formats, but it is optional and inconsistent across pharmacies.

SB 940- Prescription Drugs – Accessible Labels for Blind, Visually Impaired, and Print Disabled Individuals would:

- ensure that blind, visually impaired, and print disabled Marylanders are informed about the availability of accessible prescription labels;
- require pharmacies to implement a program to provide, upon request, to blind, visually impaired, and low vision Marylanders an accessible label that meets their needs, e.g. large print, audio, or Braille.
- ensure pharmacies will provide these labels at no additional cost to patients; and
- that pharmacies will provide the accessible medication labels and medication at a comparable time to those without disabilities receiving medication from those pharmacies.

Colleagues, I want to thank you for your thoughtful consideration of SB 940, it is needed and so important for the blind and visually impaired to be provided notice and accessibility to these labels for their prescriptions. This bill will make sure we protect the health and safety of our visually disabled Marylanders in regard to their medical prescriptions.

I ask for your favorable report on SB 940 that requires pharmacies to advise customers that these readers are available and print them upon request; pharmacies must also explain the available options.