



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 388

**Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program
(Access to Care Act)**

Finance Committee

FAVORABLE

TO: Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair; Senator Katherine Klausmeier, Vice-Chair; and the Members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Rev. Kenneth Phelps, Jr., The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

DATE: February 7, 2024

The Episcopal Church teaches that access to quality and affordable health care is – along with nutrition and housing – a basic human right and the Church supports those efforts to provide universal and equitable access for all. Our General Convention urges all Episcopalians to advocate for just and adequate health care policies and views this as a mission of the Church and a vital component in the promotion of healthy American communities.

We are all hurt by the high cost of prescription drugs, whether it is at the pharmacy counter, through our insurance premiums, or through government spending of our taxpayer dollars. These skyrocketing costs place considerable burdens on our families and neighbors. Unfortunately, the problem is getting worse, with drug corporations increasing prices for some drugs by more than five times the inflation rate as recently as July 2023. As these costs continue to soar, many Marylanders will continue to face difficult decisions paying for their lifesaving medications or other necessities.

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly created the first-in-the-nation Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB), a landmark approach to address the skyrocketing costs of medicines which is now being replicated across the country. The PDAB has the authority to implement upper payment limits to make high-cost drugs more affordable for state and local governments. For this we thank you. But now is the time to do more.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

The Maryland Episcopal
Public Policy
Network

We strongly urge the Maryland General Assembly in 2024 to expand the authority of the Prescription Drug Affordability Board so that it can implement upper payment limits to make high-cost drugs more affordable for all Marylanders.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a Favorable report