



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony prepared for the
Finance Committee
on
Senate Bill 388
February 7, 2024
Position: **Favorable**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to support access to adequate and appropriate medical care in Maryland. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community with a demographically diverse Maryland constituency from Red House to Ocean City.

Our community has advocated for access to appropriate, adequate, and affordable health care for all people in the United States since 2003 (*Caring for Health*, ELCA). We include medical treatment in “appropriate” and “adequate care”, and therefore any calculation of “affordable”.

We were among advocates for the passage of the 2019 bill establishing a Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board to monitor and address pharmaceutical prices covered under the State’s Medicaid program. We, likewise, supported SB202/HB279 of 2023 affirming the authority of PDAB to establish upper payment limits in certain indicated circumstances.

Drug price monitoring for cost containment will benefit almost all medical clients. Expensive drugs can compromise the adequacy of medical treatment for anyone. This is a particular concern of our community for those who are financially disadvantaged. When pricing is chiefly influenced by demand, “most expensive” could also mean “most needed.”

Reviewing and regulating prices on the most expensive drugs sold in the State, as PDAB is authorized to do for State programs, would have a containment effect across its pharmaceutical market. Several other states have already done this. The federal Medicare program has recently announced it is beginning to do this for some of the high-cost medications it covers. We believe Maryland, as the state innovator of prescription drug price review, should do the same.

Please make health care in Maryland more affordable for thousands of its residents. Give this bill a favorable report.

Lee Hudson