



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 939

Epinephrin Cost Reduction Act of 2024

Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee

By Mukta Bain, Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative

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Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **House Bill 939, the Epinephrin Cost Reduction Act**. Too many Marylanders struggle to afford the epinephrin injectors they need to ensure they are safe in an allergy-related emergency. These auto-injectors can cost hundreds of dollars, even with insurance coverage, placing unnecessary financial stressors on Maryland patients and families. HB 939 would establish a cap on copayments and coinsurance to limit what covered patients are required to pay to no more than \$60 for epinephrin injector prescriptions. We thank Delegate Palakovich Carr and Senator Lam for sponsoring this critical legislation, which would further establish important patient protections for covered Marylanders.

In 2016, Mylan (the maker of EpiPens) became the poster child for the dysfunction of the pharmaceutical industry after it raised the price of their auto-injector to \$600—a 400% increase since the company acquired the brand. At that time, industry experts estimated that the cost to produce an EpiPen was approximately \$30, with there being less than \$1 of epinephrin inside the device.<sup>i</sup> While additional generics and alternative brands have since come to market, their effects on bringing prices down have been muted at best. Many Maryland families are still likely hundreds if not thousands of dollars each year, particularly in cases where multiple members require auto-injectors and need them stocked in places like school, daycare, home, in travel bags, and in the hands of regular caregivers. Epinephrin injectors can be the difference between death and survival for those experiencing anaphylaxis, so there is no avoiding the steep costs of this life-saving medication. HB 939 offers our state the opportunity to ensure more Marylanders have access to this essential prescription without forcing them into financial crisis, joining the ranks of several other states, including Colorado, Illinois, and New Jersey that have recently passed laws establishing copay caps on epinephrin injectors.

This Committee has a long history of establishing innovating approaches to ensuring Marylanders can afford the prescription drugs they need, including passage of Maryland's Insulin Cost Reduction Act which went into effect in January of 2023. Maryland also established the first-in-the-nation Prescription Drug Affordability Board in 2019, which examines the entirety of the supply chain in its review of high-cost prescription drugs. In addition to this legislation, we encourage this issue to be further examined by the Prescription Drug Affordability Board so that all Marylanders who rely on epinephrin injectors, including the uninsured, can afford this life-saving medication. Prescription drug pricing is a complex issue, and a comprehensive solution requires thorough review of several factors, including unintended consequences that may result.

MCHI remains committed to ensuring all Marylanders have access to their medication, because drugs don't work if people can't afford them. We urge a favorable report of this legislation and thank the Committee for its ongoing commitment to ensuring all Marylanders have access to quality, affordable health care.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/consumer/industry-insiders-estimate-epipen-costs-no-more-30-n642091>