



Testimony for **HB 340**
Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Authority for Upper Payment Limits and Funding
(The Lowering Prescription Drug Costs For All Marylanders Now Act)
Position: **FAV**

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee:

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director with 1199SEIU- the largest healthcare union in the nation, where we represent over 10,000 healthcare workers in Maryland. 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East is Maryland's largest healthcare union, representing over 400,000 healthcare workers across the East Coast. We strongly support HB 340 to expand the authority of the Prescription Drug Affordability Board and continue lowering prescription drug costs of all Marylanders.

Since the establishment of the Prescription Drug Affordability Board in 2019, Maryland has been a trailblazer in ensuring lifesaving drugs were affordable and accessible. Recent polling has shown that 88% of Marylanders are in favor of this legislative action, now we just need lawmakers who will continue to stand up to Big Pharma. This legislation aims to ensure we have sustainable investment from the State as the board expands its impact by setting upper payment limits on prescription drugs.

As healthcare workers, 1199SEIU recognizes that prescriptions do little good if our patients cannot afford them. Some of our members are even sharing medications as they struggle with their own budgets. About six in ten adults say they are currently taking at least one prescription drug and a quarter say they currently take four or more prescription medications. According to public surveys, individuals with household incomes of less than \$40,000 per year and those taking four or more prescription drugs are likely to report affordability challenges.¹

Prescription drug price increases place an unsustainable burden on our healthcare system—and that the time to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable is now. What we have today is a healthcare system where pharmaceutical companies drive prices higher through their monopolistic market power—with the largest companies spending far more on advertising than on research.

For these reasons and more, 1199SEIU urges a favorable report from the Committee on HB 340. We extend our deepest gratitude Delegate Pena-Melnyk for her leadership and the committee for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ricarra Jones
Political Director
1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
Ricarra.jones@1199.org

¹ <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/public-opinion-on-prescription-drugs-and-their-prices/>