



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

[www.womensdemocraticclub.org](http://www.womensdemocraticclub.org)

**House Bill 0340 – Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Authority for  
Upper Payment Limits and Funding (Lowering Prescription Drug  
Costs for All Marylanders Act of 2024)  
House Health and Government Operations Committee – February 8, 2024  
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2024 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

**WDC urges the passage of HB0340.** In 2019 Maryland became the first state to establish a Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB), "the Board", designed to address the affordability of prescription drugs by analyzing costs, suggesting effective ways to lower spending, and enable the PDAB Board to set upper payment limits for certain high-cost drugs after conducting an affordability review. [Currently, six states \(Colorado, Maine, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oregon and Washington\) have passed similar legislation based on the Maryland model.](#)

The skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs affects all Marylanders. Older adults, who are more likely to have chronic conditions requiring prescription drug treatment and are on fixed incomes, suffer disproportionately from high prescription drug prices. A [January 2024 report](#) by AARP Public Policy Institute found that the average price increases for prescription drugs widely used by older Americans, including Medicare beneficiaries, outstripped the price increases for other consumer goods and services between 2006 and 2020. In 2020, the average annual cost for widely used prescription drugs used to treat chronic conditions was more than \$26,000 per drug per year. This cost was:

- More than 40 percent higher than the average Social Security retirement benefit (\$18,034),
- Nearly 90 percent of the median income for Medicare beneficiaries (\$29,650), and
- More than one-third of the median US household income (\$69,639).

Furthermore, according to the [Maryland Health Care for All!](#) Coalition, polling routinely shows women are more likely than men to skip or ration their medication, causing poor health outcomes. In fact, many of the most prohibitively expensive medicines on the market are used to treat diseases that disproportionately affect women, such as Herceptin, a breast cancer drug costing over \$60,000 a year.

The Board's current authority only covers prescription drugs under state and local government health care plans. This bill would expand the board's authority to implement



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broader cost controls to private insurers so that everyone, especially women and children, would benefit from reduced drug prices. Protecting pocketbooks of Marylanders, especially those who are underserved, is an important goal of this bill.

Prescription drug affordability boards are growing in popularity as a state tool for reining in drug costs. The effectiveness of prescription drug affordability boards will depend in part on the state of Maryland's ability to ensure sustainable funding. This bill is designed to do just that.

**We ask for your support for House Bill 340 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.**

Tazeen Ahmad  
WDC President

Margaret Hadley  
WDC Committee on Health

Cynthia Rubenstein  
Chair, WDC Advocacy

Diana Rubin  
WDC Committee on Aging