



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

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HB0340

February 8, 2024

TO: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of the City of Baltimore

RE: House Bill 340 – Prescription Drug Affordability Board -Authority for Upper Payment Limits and Funding
Lowering Prescription Drug Costs For All Marylanders Now Act

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that on the behalf of my Baltimore City Administration (BCA) and the Commission on Aging, Resources and Empowerment (CARE), I fully **support** House Bill (HB) 340.

HB 340 requires the Governor to appropriate money to support the Prescription Drug Affordability Board and enables the Board to set upper payment limits for prescription drugs that present an affordability challenge.

Members of the CARE are appointed by the Mayor and City Council to advise the City on issues of concern to older Baltimore City residents. The high cost of prescription drugs is an important issue for our Commission. Older adults in Baltimore City are more than twice as likely to live below the poverty line as their counterparts in other jurisdictions.ⁱ They are also significantly more likely to have a disability, including one that affects mobility, vision, or self-care.

High prescription prices compound these risk factors. Older City residents are often forced to choose between paying for food, housing, and their prescription costs. If an older patient is trying to manage a chronic medical condition, taking medications consistently is an important part of their treatment regimen. If patients fail to maintain prescription schedules because they cannot afford the drugs, they expose themselves to the possibility of acute care episodes, which in turn may increase health care costs through increased hospitalizations and emergency department utilization. This is especially true when high-cost specialty drugs are prescribed.

HB 340 empowers the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to begin to address the high cost of prescription drugs, which will help reduce a major challenge to the health and wellbeing of Baltimore City's older adults.

For the above reasons, I request a **favorable** report on HB 340.

ⁱ US Census Bureau. (n.d.). QuickFacts Baltimore City, Maryland. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/baltimorecitymaryland/PST045222>