

Madam Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Hayes, and distinguished members of the Committee,

HB1310 expands the Maryland Prescription Drug Repository Program by allowing out-of-state pharmacies to participate, increasing Marylanders' access to affordable, donated prescription medications.

A July 2022 survey of over 1,300 Maryland adults found that 55% faced at least one healthcare affordability burden, while 48% experienced a cost-related barrier to care within the previous year. Alarming, 23% of respondents reported skipping doses, cutting pills in half, or not filling prescriptions due to cost.

While broader national and state efforts aim to address the high cost of prescription drugs, immediate action is needed to expand access to affordable medications. Prescription drug donation has the potential to significantly improve access, yet up to \$11 billion in unopened, unexpired medications are destroyed annually—\$5 billion from hospitals and long-term care facilities alone. Many of these medications could be safely collected and redistributed to patients in need at a low cost, reducing both medical waste and financial strain on Marylanders.

In 2006, the General Assembly unanimously passed legislation establishing the Prescription Drug Repository Program, creating a framework to safely dispense donated medications to those in need. However, the program has not met its original goals. Currently, only two independent Maryland pharmacies are approved to re-dispense donated drugs, and many pharmacies face barriers to participation—particularly out-of-state pharmacies.

This bill would enable the Board to approve out-of-state pharmacies as repositories, allowing Maryland residents to benefit from well-established, multi-state drug donation networks. It would also allow Maryland donors and patients to work with top national organizations specializing in safe medication redistribution.

I appreciate the thoughtful discussions around amendments to this bill. These changes ensure stronger oversight while maintaining the program's core goal—expanding access to affordable medications. By refining safety and operational guidelines, they help build confidence in the program and encourage broader participation. I believe these amendments enhance the bill's impact while addressing stakeholder concerns, and I support their inclusion.

I urge your support for this important initiative to expand access to affordable medications for Marylanders. Thank you.