

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 357
Before the Senate Finance Committee
By Erica Miller
February 6, 2025

Madam Chair, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee;

My name is Erica Miller, I am a Baltimore City resident who works in data management and runs a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping local nonprofits navigate the digital landscape effectively. I would like to thank this committee for the work it has done on prescription drug affordability so far, and to urge your support for Senate Bill 357, today. This is an issue that is of particular importance to me, because like so many of your constituents, I have been hurt by the skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs.

Several years ago, as I was working to get a diagnosis for my son, I learned well into my adulthood that I have ADHD. It explained so many of my struggles over the years, and while I initially tried to convince myself that this was something I should overcome on my own, I finally agreed to try medication. It took trial and error, but I cannot begin to express to you the relief I felt when I found the right dosage of Vyvanse. The static noise and racing thoughts disappeared, and for the first time in my life, I experienced a quiet mind.

It was life changing. My focus and performance at work improved, tasks felt manageable, and my anxiety quieted as I finally felt like I had things under control. With Vyvanse I no longer felt like I was constantly playing catch-up, and I was able to work with a therapist to develop additional tools to help me function in a world that often isn't built for people with neurodivergence.

From the start, Vyvanse was expensive, but I was fortunate enough to be able to afford the nearly \$100 a month copay. That changed when I lost my health insurance. Suddenly I was facing a bill over \$600 at the pharmacy counter, something I simply couldn't handle as a mother supporting two children. Drugs don't work if people can't afford them—and unfortunately, I am a living example of that motto. Forced to stop taking my medication, I felt the immediate negative impacts, and performing my corporate job duties became much more difficult. I know that the high cost of prescription drugs caused me to lose my job. It took losing my job to fully realize that the soaring cost of prescription drugs can impact middle class professionals, as well, it is just simply not something you expect to struggle with. It is my hope that with Senate Bill 357, we can help protect other Marylanders from the same hurt.

Even after I secured different employer-provided insurance, my struggles with Vyvanse continued. Each month it seemed my prescription would be a different cost, making it incredibly hard to plan for. Last year, after an unexplained jump to \$388.40 a month, I finally had to switch medications. The generic version of Vyvanse is routinely out of stock, and I simply can't afford to skip taking this medicine. After some trial and error, I settled on Focalin, which isn't as effective for me as Vyvanse, but is better than nothing.

In 2023 the makers of Vyvanse made more than \$3 billion in revenue from the drug. It simply feels wrong that a medicine that so many of us need to function is too expensive to actually help.ⁱ Drugs don't work if people can't afford them, and we can't afford to wait to take action in Maryland. We need a Prescription Drug Affordability Board with the authority to set statewide upper payment limits so that everyday Marylanders can see relief. For this reason, I ask you to please support Senate Bill 357.

ⁱ <https://www.biospace.com/fda-approves-generics-of-takeda-s-adhd-binge-eating-drug-vyvanse#:~:text=Takeda%20won%20ownership%20of%20the,from%20the%20previous%20fiscal%20year.>