

SB0357_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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TESTIMONY ON SB#0357 - FAVORABLE

Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Authority for Upper Payment Limits (Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Now Act)

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0357, Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Authority for Upper Payment Limits (Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Now Act)

The Maryland General Assembly, recognizing the problems the increasing cost of medications has created for Marylanders, has begun the process of addressing prescription drug affordability for Marylanders. As a leader in the nation, Maryland's first-in-the-nation Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB) is working hard at keeping Maryland patients' best interests at heart. They accomplish this by examining high-cost prescription drugs and determining ways to make them more affordable.

Yet, with inflation affecting multiple segments of society, the ability of people to afford the medications they need continues to be constrained. It is unfair that Marylanders are forced to skip doses, cut their pills in half, or leave a prescription at the pharmacy counter all while pharmaceutical corporations make record-breaking profits. Maryland's PDAB needs to be enabled to do more to help Marylanders afford their health care utilization of medicines. Unfortunately, its current authority is limited to addressing costs for only state and local government entities. This bill will support expanding this authority in 2025 so that the PDAB can set statewide upper payment limits. Doing so will facilitate an authority for the PDAB to implement upper payment limits making high-cost drugs more affordable for all Marylanders. It is critical that the PDAB is given this authority because we know that drugs don't work if people can't afford them.

We are all hurt by the high cost of prescription drugs, whether at the pharmacy counter, through our insurance premiums, or through government spending of our taxpayer dollars. At a time when one in three Marylanders reports having skipped a dose or rationed medication due to cost it is incumbent upon the General Assembly to be proactive in addressing this medical crisis.

This bill requires the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, under certain circumstances, to establish a process for setting upper payment limits for all purchases and payer reimbursements of prescription drug products in the State that the Board determines have led or will lead to affordability challenges. It decrees that the Board has the authority to reconsider an upper payment limit for a drug that becomes a current shortage. It alters the requirements related to the setting of upper payment limits by the Board.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0357.