

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 357
Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Authority for Upper Payment Limits
(Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Now Act)
Before the Senate Finance Committee

By Brian R. Jacobs, MD, Pediatric Critical Care and Clinical Informatics, Annapolis, Maryland,
AND MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE TO PROTECT HEALTH CARE
February 6, 2025

Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Hayes, and Members of the Finance Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of **SB 357**, which would grant Maryland's Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB) the expanded authority to set statewide upper payment limits to make high-cost drugs more affordable for my patients and all Marylanders. I'd also like to thank Senator Dawn Gile and Chair Brian Feldman for sponsoring these critical bills.

I've been a physician in Annapolis, Maryland for over 18 years. I know too well that drugs are not beneficial if patients cannot afford them. Time and time again, I've seen families grappling with very difficult decisions between buying groceries and putting gas in the car, or filling/refilling a prescription. No patient, young or old, should be forced to go without a beneficial or lifesaving prescription because of the cost. When, as too often happens, they're forced to split or skip pills, their otherwise manageable condition worsens, becoming more difficult to treat, resulting in an ER or inpatient visit and reducing their quality of life.

I am thankful for the work Maryland has already done to help alleviate these problems and lead the nation toward more affordable prescription drugs. Our first-in-the-nation PDAB has been a landmark initiative in addressing skyrocketing drug costs. The Board's approval of the Upper Payment Limit Action Plan will make a huge difference for state and local governments. But more must be done, now more than ever. While patients across the state are struggling, pharmaceutical corporations continue to bring in record profits. In 2024, Merck, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, Roche, AstraZeneca, and Sanofi all profited in excess of \$50 Billion. We cannot count on federal action to address these issues under the new administration.

At this critical point, I urge you to support SB 357 to address prescription drug costs statewide, beyond just state and local government plans. This legislation can provide meaningful relief for patients and families while helping to bring down health insurance premiums across the board. The PDAB has already demonstrated its effectiveness in tackling this issue, and expanding its authority would be a transformative step in making prescription drugs more affordable for all Marylanders.

I urge a favorable report of SB357 to give Maryland's Board the tools it needs to protect patients and ensure that cost is never a barrier to accessing life-saving medications.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Brian R. Jacobs, MD
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