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The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk
House Health and Government Operations Committee
241 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

IN SUPPORT OF

House Bill #424: Prescription Drug Affordability Board -
Authority for Upper Payment Limits
(Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Now Act)

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender, trans-led community power building organization dedicated to Maryland's trans community. Trans Maryland believes in protecting the rights of all Marylanders, particularly transgender community members, to access safe, inclusive, and appropriate healthcare, including access to affordable prescription drugs. **Because of this, we strongly support House Bill 424.**

We applaud the Maryland General Assembly for authorizing the establishment of the state Prescription Drug Affordability Board—the first of its kind in the nation—and the progress that Board has made to date, including the approval of the Upper Payment Limit Action Plan which will help make prescription drugs more affordable for state and local governments.

However, prescription drug costs continue to rise, presenting significant affordability challenges to all Marylanders. As many of 45% of Marylanders report struggling to afford the medicines they need. No one should have to choose between lifesaving medicine and other necessities. Further, the growth in drug costs is a major driver of increased health insurance premiums, making healthcare coverage overall less affordable. Meanwhile, prescription drug companies continue to profit and spend freely on advertising and other activities irrelevant to the public good.

Federal action on prescription drug affordability is uncertain, but Maryland can and should continue to be a national leader on prescription drug affordability. Expanding the authority of the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to make high-cost drugs more affordable to all Marylanders is a meaningful step in that direction. **For these reasons, Trans Maryland urges a favorable report on House Bill 424.**