



Montgomery County MD Section

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 424

Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Authority for Upper Payment Limits

(Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Now Act)

Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee

By Andrea Guy-McFarland, Social Justice Chair,

Montgomery County (MD) Section of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW)

February 6, 2025

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in favor of HB 424**, which would grant Maryland's Prescription Drug Affordability Board the expanded authority to set statewide upper payment limits to make high-cost drugs more affordable for Marylanders. Our organization was elated at the establishment of the precedent-setting Board. This step has proven successful: yet, due to the high cost of medications, many Marylanders continue to be forced to choose between filling their prescriptions and paying their bills. We have direct knowledge of the stress and health concerns caused by the choices individuals and families are making. Given this time of uncertainty for many of our families, this legislation could provide reassurance that our families and neighbors in Maryland will have one less thing to worry about regarding their health. On behalf of Marylanders, we thank Vice-Chair Bonnie Cullison and Delegate Jennifer White Holland for sponsoring this life-sustaining legislation.

The National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) is an "organization of organizations" (comprised of 300 campus and community-based sections and 32 national women's organizations) that enlightens, inspires and connects more than 2,000,000 women and men. Two of its focus areas are Health and Social Justice. As such, the Montgomery County Section of NCNW has watched the solid progress of the Board but is keenly aware of its limitations. Montgomery is a County where singles, families and seniors report rationing medication, or deciding to not fill a prescription. In essence, many are forced to play Russian roulette with their health. Even when there is insurance coverage, often the escalating costs of medications are not fully covered, so doses are quietly but routinely skipped.

Marylanders should not have to choose between their prescription drugs and other necessities. With federal action on this issue uncertain, it is critical that Maryland, under the guidance of this committee, continues to lead the nation on prescription drug affordability efforts. We thank you for your consideration of this issue and strongly urge a favorable report of House Bill 424.