

HB1230- State Prescription Drug Benefits – Retirees

Position: Support

Dennis M. Cathell

I am sending this letter to you so that you can submit it to _____ as a real life example of the financial ruin State of Maryland retirees would go through if the State of Maryland is allowed to force it's retirees to solely rely on Medicare Part D for prescription coverage.

My wife has had a seizure disorder since she was in the second grade. For years her medications kept her seizures somewhat under control. However, around 2007 she began having seizures quite often and they were occurring anytime, anywhere and under any circumstances. She had also started falling and three of those falls would have been fatal had she fallen as little as 2 inches in the wrong direction. This was all despite the fact she was under the care of a local Neurologist who had her on three seizure medications. At that point we asked for a referral and began to see a Neurologist who is part of a team at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore, MD. They hospitalized her for a week and once she was released they slowly, scientifically tried her on various medications until they found the correct drug and dosage that is now keeping her seizure free. Mind you, this did not occur over a few days or months. It took a few YEARS for them to have this level of success. The medication she is taking is Lamictal XR and her doctor truly believes she must take BRAND ONLY not generic.

Yesterday, I met with a counselor at the MAC Center in Salisbury, Maryland who is working with seniors during open enrollment for

Medicare Part D. She discovered that if my wife had to rely solely on Medicare Part D for her prescription coverage for the year 2020 it would cost us at least \$33,467.76 for the year. That figure is astronomical in and of itself but is absolutely appalling when you consider that it will cost us \$320.00 for the year 2020 if we stay on the prescription coverage we have through my State of Maryland retirement.

It is totally unconscionable that the State of Maryland would put their own retirees, who are now SENIOR CITIZENS, in such dire financial straits. ALL of us were told the day we were hired that we would have health and prescription insurance for the rest of our lives if we would agree to put in 30 years of service. Most of us planned our finances for our retirement years with that in mind. What is even more shameful however is that the State of Maryland did not even have the moral decency to forewarn its' own retirees, all the way back in 2011 that this was going to happen. They waited SEVEN YEARS to announce this. By doing so, they took away our only opportunity to plan for this financially.

I truly believe the State of Maryland must now develop all of the morality and ethics it required of its' employees during our years of service, by grandfathering all current retirees into the prescription coverage program that we were promised all those years ago. While doing so they must make this action PERMANENT and one that cannot be undone by a future legislature or governor of the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,
Dennis M. Cathell
Member # 106