



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

Senate Bill 0537 – Pharmacists - Required Notification and Authorized Substitution - Lower-Cost Drug or Device Product
Health and Government Operations Committee – February 16, 2021
SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2021 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in our County with hundreds of politically active women and men, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of SB0537. This bill will provide additional transparency and cost-savings for a retail consumer at the pharmacy counter and requires pharmacists to disclose substitutions in a manner that is accessible to the consumer, including notifying the consumer about (1) the options available based on their prescription benefit, and (2) the cost difference between the prescribed drug or device and a lower priced equivalent.

According to the Maryland Department of Aging, the number of older citizens is increasing. By 2030, Maryland's population aged 60 and over is anticipated to increase by 40%. Over 56% of this older population will be female. Elderly women face significant challenges making ends meet. According to Census data, 12% of women aged 65 and older live in poverty, compared to 7.4% of their male peers. Furthermore, according to AARP, women are more likely to say they are taking a prescription drug than men.

Americans (particularly women over 50) say it is important that pharmaceutical companies be required to publish information about the cost and effectiveness of their medications to treat specific medical conditions. Health care costs increase as we age, and can be a significant budget item for those on a limited or fixed income. In fact, one in four Americans aged 50 and over who have taken a prescription drug in the past five years said they did not fill a prescription written by their doctor in the past two years, reporting cost as the main deterrent.

For older women, especially those on fixed incomes, transparency at the point of purchase and the ability to understand their options in advance not only helps them plan financially, but gives them the knowledge to have an informed discussion with their health care provider about the least costly alternatives.

We ask for your support for SB0537 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Respectfully,

Diana Conway
President