



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0279

**Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Upper Payment Limits**

**FAVORABLE**

**DATE: January 31, 2023**

**TO:** Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair. Delegate Arian B. Kelly, Vice-Chair and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee.

**FROM:** Rev. Kenneth Phelps, Jr., Co-Director, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network

**DATE:** January 31, 2023

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 0279. The Episcopal Church supports comprehensive health care and recognizes the need for universal and equitable access for all. Our General Convention urges Episcopalians to advocate for adequate health care, along with nutrition and housing, as human rights that should be provided to all those residing in our nation, including veterans. This advocacy on a number of healthcare policy asks is viewed as a Church ministry and as a way to promote healthy American communities.

The excessive cost of prescription drugs has been a burden on households for far too long and we applaud the Assembly for their actions to date. Now it is time to finish the job. Our citizens should not have to choose between buying food or paying rent or providing child care so that they might support themselves and their families and paying for overpriced prescription medications. The pharmaceutical industry has held our people hostage for far too long and has realized obscene profits in the process. For Jesus, to whom the Church looks for teaching and wisdom, providing care for the sick was an expectation of discipleship, it was a demand of the discipline of love that flowed from the very heart of Love itself. This is a welcomed next step in our progress toward universal coverage for all with all cost barriers removed.

**The Diocese of Maryland requests a Favorable report**