

TESTIMONY FOR HB0279

Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Upper Payment Limits

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Cullison

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Organization Submitting: Lower Shore Progressive Caucus

Person Submitting: Jared Schablein, Chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0279 on behalf of the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus. The Caucus is a political and activist organization on the Eastern Shore, unaffiliated with any political party, committed to empowering working people by building a Progressive movement on the Lower Eastern Shore.

Maryland residents' prescription drug costs are completely out of control. Our members praised Maryland's creation of the first Prescription Drug Affordability Board in the country. It was a courageous decision to keep prescription drug costs stable and prevent pharma and insurance corporations from ripping off citizens across the state who are already struggling to pay for the prescriptions they need to stay healthy and productive. Although the Board has been in existence for a while, due to the previous Governor's lack of foresight, it has languished without adequate budget and without a full complement of board members. The Board must formulate a strategy as soon as feasible for establishing prescription drug payment ceilings.

Drugs that are exceedingly expensive really aren't necessary for Marylanders. Most of the Coalition's members struggle with expensive drug costs. They are not able to pay the copays. They have been unable to purchase the necessary medications since they are too expensive.

We need the legislature to confirm the Board's mandate and make sure that they are fully financed and motivated to lower prescription drug prices in Maryland if we are to see the Board achieve its commitment to all Marylanders. We must find a solution to this issue right away.

It is for these reasons the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.