

SB349 deals with an issue that affects 53,000 people who retired from positions in State Government. Maryland will remove prescription benefits from Medicare-eligible State retirees who were hired before 2011 at the end of this year unless legislation is enacted to restore these benefits. Please support SB 349 that will restore retiree prescription benefits.

I am one of those State retirees. When I was hired, I was promised that I would be able to continue using all the State health benefits when I retired. My retirement plans were based on the retirement benefits I was promised by Maryland. If I must seek my own Medicare Part D pharmacy plan beginning in January 2025, I will be seriously hurt by the results. The Medicare Part D plans are **NOT** equivalent to the State pharmacy plan, and I will be harmed by this change in my pharmacy coverage.

- The list of drugs (the formulary) covered by the State pharmacy plan is much more extensive than the formulary of any Medicare Part D plan that is offered in Maryland. This means that I will have to pay the full cost of drugs that I take that are not on my plan's formulary.
- The Medicare cap on out-of-pocket costs does not include drugs not covered by Part D plans. The provisions of SB 946 that were created in 2019 to "ease my transition" also do not apply to drugs not on Part D plans' formularies. **I will end up paying thousands of dollars more than I am paying now for medications that I need.**
- The injunction in the *Fitch et al. vs. Maryland et al.* lawsuit that continued our benefits since 2018 was dissolved by the court in July 2023. This allows the State to proceed with its plan to remove prescription benefits despite the commitment made to employees at the time they were hired.
- The annual cost of the State retiree prescription benefit is only 0.2% of the State's General Fund Budget.
- Concerns about the long-term liability of this program are **overstated**. The retiree prescription plan represents only about 13% of the State's long-term liability for other post-employment benefits (OPEB). Ending the benefit cannot be expected to have a significant effect on the State's financial situation or bond rating.

Please support SB 349 and work with your delegation to urge leadership to listen to their voters. These bills would restore our prescription benefits and keep the promises the State made to us when we were hired. A state that breaks these promises cannot expect to maintain a dedicated workforce. **It is morally and ethically wrong for the State to renege on these promises.**

Thank you for your consideration of this request and your help in "leaving no one behind".

Do the right thing,

Patricia Hathaway
Bowie, MD

State Employee for over two decades!