

# Angus Worthing, M.D.

**SUBJECT:** House Bill 876 - Health Insurance - Pharmacy Benefits Managers - Specialty Drugs Dispensed by a Physician  
**COMMITTEE:** House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair  
**DATE:** Thursday, February 29, 2024  
**POSITION:** FAVORABLE

I'm Dr Angus Worthing, rheumatologist at ARA. My colleagues and I take care of over 30,000 patients a year at 7 locations in Maryland, Washington DC and Virginia.

I strongly support this bill because it will help prevent some of the most heart-breaking experiences my patients report -- barriers to obtaining their medication.

Patients have told me about many deleterious effects of being forced to use specific pharmacies: extensive time talking with pharmacies and "telephone tag", concerns about mail-order packages of expensive, cold-chain syringes being left on insecure doorsteps at inappropriate temperatures. One patient recently told me that the only way she could avoid mail order was to pick up the pen syringes at a specific chain store that had very long wait times after her long day of work, and this inconvenience caused her to miss drug doses, which caused painful disease flares. Patients with rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune diseases pay for delays with their own unnecessary pain and disability. They take stop-gap potentially toxic steroids that can provoke diabetes, broken bones, or serious infections which require costly hospitalization. And after finally receiving mail-order medications, for their first doses they wait still longer to schedule in-person injection teaching.

This bill will help us help our patients by streamlining their care – providing medication and education on injection teaching and handling, at a convenient place from a trusted source i.e. their doctor's office. This year, many patients are moving to biosimilar versions of medication, and we can make that a more effective, cost-effective experience by dispensing their new biosimilar at the point of care. And we can authorize and dispense new doses when we identify disease flares at the point of care.

Please imagine my reply to the grievances of my patients – your constituents -- about pharmacy steering: I tell them that their state protects their choice of pharmacy with all other medications -- it's only the life-changing specialty drug that PBMs and insurance companies can force Marylanders to obtain at certain pharmacies.

Please close this loophole and allow Marylanders to use the pharmacy that's best for them.