

Witness Testimony for HB1377

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Matthew Hollister, and I am the co-founder and chairman of the James Hollister Wellness Foundation, a nonprofit based in Rockville, Maryland. Our mission is to save viable, unopened medications from being needlessly destroyed and redirect them for charitable use, both here in Maryland and abroad.

Through our work, we have seen firsthand how much safe, sealed medication is wasted every day, and we routinely receive excess inventory from families, clinics, and long-term care facilities—medications that are unexpired, in their original packaging, and perfectly safe for a pharmacist to verify and dispense. We've also learned through our work about Maryland's existing Prescription Drug Repository Program, and we have donated some of the medications we collected directly into it. Consequently, I've become a big advocate of the program but right now I believe it is dramatically underutilized.

As we speak, tens of thousands of Marylanders struggle to afford the prescriptions they need to manage chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension, asthma, and cancer. The gap between what is wasted and what is needed is unfortunate—but there are opportunities to address it.

HB1377 is one such opportunity to bridge that gap. It creates a pilot program that allows counties to collect sealed, unexpired, non-controlled medications collected during National Drug Take Back Day and redirect them to Maryland's existing repository infrastructure. This is not a new system; it is a practical expansion of programs Maryland already has in place.

A statewide pilot gives Maryland the ability to capture qualifying medications from regions with high waste, and redirect them to regions with high need, strengthening health equity across the state.

The benefits are clear.

- For patients it offers access to life-saving medications they otherwise cannot afford.
- For the state it reduces pharmaceutical waste and lowers environmental impact.
- And for healthcare institutions it is a legal, structured pathway to donate medications they currently may be paying to destroy.

HB1377 offers a solution that is fiscally, environmentally, and morally responsible. It turns unnecessary waste into life saving care, using systems Maryland already has in place. Even if only a small percentage of what is collected during Drug Take Back Day qualifies for Maryland's Drug Repository program, it would still result in hundreds-of-thousands, if not millions, of dollars worth of medicine being saved for those who struggle to afford them.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB1377. Thank you for your time and consideration.