



TESTIMONY FOR HB1134 – Pharmaceutical Drugs and Devices – Gifts to Health Care Professionals – Prohibition – FAVORABLE

Bill Sponsors: Delegates Taveras, Lehman, and Schindler

Committee: Health

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Jessica Gorski, Executive Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Gorski, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB1134 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations representing more than 30,000 Marylanders across every legislative district. Our mission is to ensure that state policy protects people’s lives, health, and dignity, especially when it comes to the integrity of our healthcare system and the trust patients place in their providers.

HB1134 strengthens that commitment by establishing clear, enforceable statewide standards that prohibit sellers of certain pharmaceutical drugs and medical devices from giving or offering gifts to health care professionals with a total retail value exceeding \$50 in any calendar year. The bill defines “gift” broadly to include payments, food, entertainment, travel, services, and other items of value, unless the health care professional pays fair market value. Peer-reviewed medical literature is explicitly excluded from the definition of a gift. Violations are subject to misdemeanor penalties to ensure meaningful enforcement.

These protections are urgently needed.

Financial incentives from pharmaceutical and device manufacturers can influence prescribing patterns, distort clinical decision-making, and undermine patient trust. Even small gifts have been shown to affect provider behavior, and Maryland currently lacks a uniform statewide standard to prevent inappropriate influence. HB1134 closes those gaps by ensuring that gifts above a modest threshold are prohibited, that the definition of “gift” is clear and comprehensive, that health care professionals remain free from undue commercial influence, and that sellers who violate the law face

appropriate penalties. These measures create a consistent, transparent framework that protects both patients and providers.

HB1134 also has meaningful implications for healthcare access and equity. When gifts or incentives influence prescribing decisions, patients may be steered toward higher-cost medications or devices that are not clinically necessary. This can increase out-of-pocket costs, create barriers to accessing affordable and effective treatments, reduce adherence when patients cannot afford prescribed therapies, and widen disparities for low-income and uninsured Marylanders. By limiting gifts and reducing the potential for biased prescribing, **HB1134 helps ensure that treatment decisions are based solely on clinical need rather than marketing pressure. This strengthens patient trust, supports evidence-based care, and improves access to affordable medications and devices.**

HB1134 aligns squarely with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. It protects patients from undue influence, supports ethical medical practice, and ensures that Maryland's healthcare system operates with integrity. **No patient should ever question whether a prescription or treatment recommendation is shaped by a gift rather than their best interest.**

We respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on HB1134.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jessica Gorski
Executive Committee
Maryland Legislative Coalition