

March 10, 2026

Maryland General Assembly
House of Delegates Health Committee
90 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony in Favor of Maryland House Bill 1134 Pharmaceutical Drugs and Devices – Gifts to Health Care Professionals – Prohibition

I am a law professor at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law who researches and teaches at the intersection of law and health policy. I focus in particular on areas in which private sector incentives may diverge from the public interest and ways in which this law can be used to address this divergence and realign private incentives with public health needs. I am also a Maryland resident.

I am writing to provide my support for HB 1134, a proposed bill that will further this goal of aligning private incentives more closely with public health needs by limiting the ability of pharmaceutical companies to use gifts and samples as marketing tools that compromise independent, rational prescribing.

There is a robust body of evidence to suggest that even small gifts from pharmaceutical companies have an impact on prescribing behavior. There is also research to suggest that samples, which should be considered as gifts, may have an even bigger impact on prescribing behavior than other types of gifts. Prescribing decisions should be based solely on serving the needs of the patient and should not be influenced by the commercial interests of companies with a vested interest in encouraging sales of their products.

Decisions about what drugs to prescribe should be made without pharmaceutical industry influence. HB 1134 offers additional protections to ensure the independence of prescribing decisions from commercial influence, therefore serving the best interests of patients. It is in the interest of Marylanders to have such protections in place.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,
Liza Vertinsky

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