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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Madam Chair Bagnall and distinguished members of the Health Committee, it is my pleasure to come before you and offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 1377: Prescription Drug Repository Program - Redirecting Safe Prescription Drugs Pilot Program**. This bill expands our existing drug repository structure to include medication collected during the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) National Prescription Drug Take Back Days.

Every year in the United States, an estimated \$2–5 billion worth of prescription medications go to waste in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and households -- while millions of Americans struggle to afford the medications they need. At the same time, cost-related nonadherence -- which is when patients skip doses, split pills, or fail to fill prescriptions due to cost -- leads to worsening health outcomes, increased hospitalizations, and higher overall health system spending. The high cost of medication not only harms patients, but it also drives avoidable strain on our health care system.

Maryland has taken an important step to address this waste by authorizing licensed repositories to accept, store, and dispense donated medications that meet strict safety criteria. These existing programs already ensure that only unopened, unexpired, and properly handled medications are eligible for redistribution, with patient safety as the top priority.

However, a gap remains. Medications collected during the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, administered by DEA, are currently destroyed, even when they are unopened, safe, and otherwise eligible for redistribution under Maryland law. Since the program's inception, more than 8,650 tons of medications have been collected and incinerated nationwide. While Take Back Day plays a critical role in preventing diversion and misuse, it does not distinguish between medications that must be destroyed and those that could safely help a patient in need.

HB1377 seeks to address that gap by establishing the Redirecting Safe Prescription Drugs Pilot Program to allow eligible medications collected at selected Take Back sites to be identified and redirected to Maryland's existing licensed repositories. Rather than creating a new system, the pilot builds on Maryland's established drug repository infrastructure and maintains all current safety, storage, and dispensing requirements, ensuring that patient protection remains paramount.

This bill is a practical, commonsense step toward reducing waste, strengthening medication access, and ensuring that safe, usable prescriptions reach patients instead of being unnecessarily destroyed. I urge a favorable report on **House Bill 1377**.