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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

House Bill 429 – Pharmacists – Required Notifications and Authorized Substitutions – Lower-Cost Drug or Device Product

Health and Government Operations Committee – February 3, 2021

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SUPPORT

Background: House Bill 429 (HB429) would require Maryland pharmacists or pharmacy staff, to inform customers about the availability of less expensive prescription drugs or devices that are therapeutically equivalent.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) has long been concerned about the rising cost of health care, particularly pharmaceutical drugs and devices. Drug costs are a major cause of higher health care premiums, and cause significant financial challenges for seniors in our communities who live on fixed incomes.

Consumers should not be forced into paying sky high prices for life-saving medicine and devices, just because they are unaware that cheaper options exist. This bill would ensure that every consumer is always paying as little as necessary while still receiving the same product that they have been prescribed by their healthcare provider.

The United States has some of the highest costs for prescription drugs compared to the rest of the developed world. Millions of Americans are forced into debt because of it, and even more disturbing, are forced to turn to alternative sources for medication such as unregulated black-market products. This is unacceptable, as a state we need to be taking every step possible to ensuring everyone is able to afford their medications. This bill will mean a healthier Maryland, lowering the cost of healthcare for every Marylander, allowing the entire state to benefit.

With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report on House Bill 429.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

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