



# Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

*Shared Voices for Liberal Religious Values in Maryland*

---

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 340

Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Authority for Upper Payment Limits and Funding  
(Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Act of 2024)

Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee

By Stephen C. Buckingham, Lay Community Minister and Advocacy Lead  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

February 8, 2024

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of HB 340, which would give the Prescription Drug Affordability Board the authority to set upper payment limits to make high-cost drugs affordable for ALL Marylanders. Special thank you to Delegates Cullison and White Holland for sponsoring this life-saving legislation.

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD), an advocacy organization with members in Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations throughout the state, joins other advocates to support HB 340. Health care has been a priority since our establishment 15 years ago and is supported at our national level because it supports our unifying principles especially the respect for the inherent worth and dignity of each person. We see health care as a right for all human beings, and our government should not allow prescription drug providers to make prescriptions unaffordable in order to maximize profits.

Many individuals rely on affordable prescription medications for their basic health; yet, often these essential drugs are financially out of reach for many people. We support public policies to end outrageous and unfair costs for prescription medications.

When the General Assembly created this first-in-the nation Board in 2020, it limited its authority to reducing drug costs for state and local governments. Since then, the Board has engaged in extensive studies of the pharmaceutical delivery and payment process and has examined several policy options to reduce prices to consumers/patients, including upper payment limits and bulk purchasing. Unfortunately, bulk purchasing would naturally protect only those people whose health coverage comes from state and local governments. This would leave the rest of us at the mercy of drug providers.

While we are still awaiting the Board's recommendations, we are impressed with its objectivity and the level of detail in its work. This gives us confidence that viable solutions will be recommended, but they must include benefits to all Marylanders. Now is the time to allow the Board to use upper payment limits for all purchasers of high-cost prescription drugs, with the goal of reducing prescription drug costs for all, not state and local governments.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our faith perspective and to work with you to make a difference in Maryland.

UULM-MD asks you to continue to lead the nation in making prescription drugs affordable for all. Please vote for a favorable report on HB 340.

Thank you!

*Stephen C. Buckingham*