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Baltimore Jewish Council

Behavioral Health System Baltimore

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Energy Advocates

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Family League of Baltimore

Fuel Fund of Maryland

Job Opportunities Task Force

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services,
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Maryland Center on Economic Policy

Maryland Community Action
Partnership

Maryland Family Network

Maryland Food Bank

Maryland Hunger Solutions

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St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore

Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 340

Prescription Drug Affordability Board – Authority for Upper Payment Limits and Funding

Health and Government Operations

February 8, 2024, 1pm

Submitted by Mark Huffman, Co-Chair

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports HB 340, which will enable the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to make high-cost drugs more affordable for all Marylanders – an issue that is especially critical for the health needs of low income residents.

We are all hurt by the high cost of prescription drugs, whether it is at the pharmacy counter, through our insurance premiums, or through government spending of our taxpayer dollars. These skyrocketing costs place considerable burdens on our families and neighbors. Unfortunately, the problem is getting worse, with drug corporations increasing prices for some drugs by more than five times the inflation rate as recently as July 2023. As these costs continue to soar, many Marylanders will continue to face difficult decisions paying for their lifesaving medications or other necessities.

This is an especially critical issue for low-income Marylanders facing impossible choices between paying the rent, putting food on the table, and purchasing life-saving medical care and medicines.

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly created the first-in-the-nation Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB), a landmark approach to address the skyrocketing costs of medicines which is now being replicated across the country. The PDAB, which is chaired by former Maryland Health Secretary Van Mitchell, has the authority to implement upper payment limits to make high-cost drugs more affordable for state and local governments, but we need for that authority to extend to all drugs for all residents.

We strongly urge the Maryland General Assembly in 2024 to expand the authority of the Prescription Drug Affordability Board so that it can implement upper payment limits to make high-cost drugs more affordable for all Marylanders.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 340.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.