



**HB 340 - Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Authority for Upper Payment Limits and Funding
(The Lowering Prescription Drug Costs For All Marylanders Now Act)**

Health and Government Operations Committee

February 8, 2024

SUPPORT

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 340. This bill 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 Vice-Chair Cullison and Delegate White Holland for sponsoring this life-saving legislation.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

According to Prosperity Now's most recent scorecard for Maryland, 20.2% of Maryland households experience income volatility, and 26.7% had difficulty paying for usual household expenses.¹ This shows that at least one fifth of Marylanders struggle to pay for basic expenses, including their prescriptions. Recent polling shows as many as 45% of Marylanders report struggling to afford the medicines they need, with one third of Marylanders skipping a dose or rationing medication due to cost. At the same time, skyrocketing drug costs are contributing to all of our health insurance premiums, making quality coverage less affordable for our residents. Meanwhile, prescription drug corporations use far more resources on self-enrichment and advertising than they do on research and development. Marylanders should not have to choose between their prescription drugs and other necessities like housing or food.

It is clear that Maryland residents, particularly low- to moderate-income communities are facing tremendous cost burdens in accessing medication. HB 340 builds upon Maryland's successful tradition of health care cost scrutiny and protects low- to moderate-income individuals and families from unnecessary price-hikes related to their prescription medications.

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for HB 340.

¹ Prosperity Now: <https://scorecard.prosperitynow.org/data-by-location#state/md>