

# We Need To Lower Prescription Drug Costs For Marylanders

## Urgent Need

We are all hurt by the high cost of prescription drugs, whether it's 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 be faced with difficult decisions between paying for their lifesaving medications or other necessities.



## Patients

Drugs don't work if people can't afford them. 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.

## Taxpayers

Our state and local governments often see their budgets stretched far too thin by the high cost of prescription drugs. According to County Executive Stuart Pittman, Anne Arundel County prescription **drug costs for employees and retirees are more than double the budget** for the entire library system.

## Insurance Premiums

CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield reported that one third of its health insurance premiums go towards members' prescription drug benefits, meaning **we are all paying for the skyrocketing costs of medications**.

## A New Approach to Bring Down Costs

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, which it will soon establish with the approval of the Legislative Policy Committee. This initial phase will lay important groundwork for cost reviews and drug selection that will help the PDAB moving forward.

## Action Required in 2024 To Help All Marylanders

The over 450 faith, community, labor, business and health care organizations from across the State that belong to the Prescription Drug Affordability Coalition 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. Key local leaders across Maryland join this call to action, you can view a compilation video of their appeal at [bit.ly/RxLocalLeaders](https://bit.ly/RxLocalLeaders). Colorado and Minnesota have already created PDABs, based on Maryland's model, with this full authority. For more information see [healthcareforall.com/RxResolution](https://healthcareforall.com/RxResolution).

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