



MEDIA ADVISORY

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**Legislators Begin Push to Expand Maryland Drug Board's
Authority to Help Bring Down Prescription Drug Costs**

*Campaign is Supported by New Report Detailing How Big Drug Companies Spend More on
Stock Buybacks, Dividends, Executive Compensation, and Advertising than Drug Research*

WHAT: Press conference to launch legislation to expand authority of the Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board – and to highlight a new report detailing the drug industry's troubling spending patterns

WHO: Legislative sponsors

- Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
- Senator Dawn Gile
- Senator Brian Feldman, Chair, Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
- Delegate Jennifer White Holland
- Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins, Chair, Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland
- Peter Maybarduk, Public Citizen
- Vincent DeMarco, President, Maryland Health Care For All! Coalition

WHEN: Thursday, January 18, 2024, 11 a.m.

WHERE: Media Room, Miller Senate Office Building, 11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401. The press conference will be live-streamed on

<https://www.facebook.com/mdhealthcareforall>.

Legislative sponsors and advocates will hold a January 18th press conference to kick off the campaign to pass major legislation in 2024 to expand the authority of the Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board and continue the work of bringing down high costs for medications.

The press conference will also highlight key findings in a new report from Public Citizen and Protect Our Care detailing how big drug companies are spending far more on self-enrichment, such as stock buybacks, dividends, executive compensation and advertising than on investments in new prescription drugs.

The Prescription Drug Affordability Board, created in 2019 as the first of its kind in the country, has worked tirelessly to determine how to bring down the high costs of drugs. The General Assembly charged the Board with developing strategies to aid local and state governments in reducing the cost of providing

prescriptions to their employees, a recognition of just how much governments must pay for drug coverage for their employees.

The Board will soon take a major step and announce upper payment limits for certain expensive drugs – which will help bring down drug costs for governments and save taxpayer dollars. Legislation to be introduced in the General Assembly would expand the Board’s authority to develop similar upper payment limits for high-cost drugs for *all* Marylanders.

The new report from Public Citizen details how big drug companies are more focused on enriching their shareholders and executives than innovation and undercuts the drug industry’s arguments against expanding the PDAB’s authority. The report examined big drug manufacturers’ expenditures and found that they spend far more on dividends, stock buybacks, executive compensation, and advertising than they invest in research.

“Our bottom line: drugs don’t work if people can’t afford them,” said **Delegate Bonnie Cullison** (Montgomery), the lead House sponsor and vice-chair of the House Health and Government Operations Committee. “Maryland has been a leader in developing new strategies to make drugs more affordable, but more work is needed. I will be working hard to pass this bill and empower the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to expand its work.”

“Our work to help Marylanders pay for the drugs they need is not done,” said **Senator Dawn Gile** (Anne Arundel), the lead Senate sponsor. “The Board is doing excellent work on behalf of state and local governments, and I am confident it can continue that work to benefit all people in our state.”

“This legislation is critical in our efforts to bring down the cost of the most expensive prescription drugs,” said **Senator Brian Feldman** (Montgomery), the lead Senate co-sponsor and chair of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee. “We know many Marylanders struggle to afford the medications they need to stay healthy and it’s time we do more as a state to help them. The Prescription Drug Affordability Board can deliver for all Marylanders if we give them the authorization needed to expand their work.”

“I often hear from constituents that they cannot pay for the medications they need,” said **Delegate Jennifer White Holland** (Baltimore County), the lead House co-sponsor. “As a state, this is unacceptable and we have to keep working to solve this problem. The drug affordability Board can lead the way if the General Assembly stands with consumers and passes this critical bill.”

“The Maryland Legislative Black Caucus is pleased to make this prescription drug affordability legislation one of our priorities for the 2024 Session, said **Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins** (Montgomery), Chair of the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus. “We know that achieving real health equity requires making high cost drugs more affordable for all Marylanders “

[Public Citizen](#) is a national non-profit organization that represents consumer interests through lobbying, litigation, administrative advocacy, research, and public education on a broad range of issues including safe and affordable health care.

[Protect Our Care](#) is dedicated to making high-quality, affordable and equitable health care a right, and not a privilege, for everyone in America. Protect Our Care educates the public, influences policy, supports health care champions and holds politicians accountable.