

June 23, 2025

Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board

16900 Science Drive, Suite 112-114

Bowie, MD 20715

Dear Members of the Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board,

Affordable Cancer Drugs Alliance (ACDA) is an advocacy organization dedicated to advancing policies which ensure affordable and accessible cancer care for the approximately 31,000 Marylanders diagnosed with cancer each year. According to the Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Cancer Registry, cancer continues to be the second leading cause of death in Maryland. The National Cancer Institute reports that breast and prostate cancers have the highest incidence rates in Maryland, with both occurring at levels significantly above the national averages (135.5 vs. 129.8, and 136.4 vs. 113.2, respectively). Our organization advocates for drug affordability to foster greater access to essential treatments as well as benefit the wellbeing of cancer patients.

We appreciate the board's efforts to confront escalating prescription drug prices, which ultimately harm Maryland patients and contribute to growing state and local government healthcare expenses. However, we strongly urge the board to initiate meaningful dialogue regarding the rising cost of cancer treatment. While programs including the Maryland Cancer Fund have provided necessary support to low-income families navigating large treatment expenses, additional action must be taken to effectively address the mounting costs of crucial therapies and alleviate the substantial financial burdens borne by many cancer patients across the state. To support this unmet need, we encourage the board to consider the cost review process for commonly prescribed chemotherapies, including docetaxel and doxorubicin, as well as second-line treatments, such as immunotherapies, which are often not covered by health insurance despite providing critical clinical value.

We further urge the board to prioritize the implementation of comprehensive upper payment limits (UPLs) on these essential cancer drugs. Chemotherapies are frequently associated with considerable out-of-pocket expenses regularly amounting to several thousand dollars annually. Uninsured patients may even incur out-of-pocket costs exceeding tens of thousands of dollars over the total course of treatment. In fact, the American Cancer Society estimates that costs of cancer-related care will increase by 34% by 2030. We implore the board to consider carefully

designed UPLs which fairly account for all cost drivers of the drug delivery system, including the vast multitude of pharmaceutical intermediaries, along with clinic costs of drug procurement, storage, and administration. UPLs which comprehensively account for these various input costs will support healthcare providers, enhance drug access in local clinics, and directly reduce treatment costs for patients.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective and commend the board for its steadfast commitment to relieving the financial burden of prescription medications. We look forward to forthcoming legislation that will profoundly promote justice and diligently safeguard the rights of Maryland patients.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Karadimov". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "K".

George Karadimov

Founder, Affordable Cancer Drugs Alliance