

# MINISTERS' CONFERENCE OF BALTIMORE AND VICINITY



May 15, 2024

## Comments on Select Drug(s) for Cost Review Study

Chair Mitchell, Members of the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, and Staff;

The Ministers' Conference of Baltimore & Vicinity is an organization comprised of more than 150 congregations whose focus is shifting more and more on caring for the "holistic" needs, in particular health care, for its members and the communities it serves. Our Civic Action Committee has an initiative, "And the Church Shall Lead", and one of its goals is to eradicate health disparities/inequalities. The skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs is a growing issue for members of our congregations and communities. We daily witness the effects of the skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs for our congregations and communities. During your cost review process please take into consideration that drugs do not work if people cannot afford them. We hear that the costs are so high because of the resourced needed to invent these drugs, yet we know that drug corporations spend billions more on advertising and self-enriching activities than they do on research and development. Meanwhile health inequities based on race, ethnicity, disability and place of residence persist throughout our communities. As you undertake the cost review process we urge you consider how you may help reduce health disparities in management of chronic conditions and access to medications. We appreciate your work and pray that you will act swiftly so that after you begin to address costs for state and local governments we can work to expand the Board's authority to make high-cost prescription drugs for all. It is a moral imperative.

Sincerely,

Bishop Reginald Kennedy,  
President, Ministers' Conference of Baltimore & Vicinity (MCBV)