



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Comments on Select Drug(s) for Cost Review Study

TO: Chair Mitchell, Members of the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, and Staff;
FROM: Betty McGarvie Crowley
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland Health Care Lead Advocate
DATE: May 8, 2024

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD), an advocacy organization with members in Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations throughout the state, joins other advocates to support HB 340. Since our establishment 15 years ago, Health Care has been one of our priorities. Our faith supports Health Care on a national level because it invokes our unifying principles—especially the respect for the inherent worth and dignity of each person. We see health care as a right for all human beings, and our government should not allow prescription drug providers to make prescriptions unaffordable in order to maximize profits.

Many individuals rely on affordable prescription medications for their basic health; yet, often these essential drugs are financially out of reach. We support public policies to end outrageous and unfair costs for prescription medications.

We thank the Prescription Drug Affordability Board and Stakeholder Council for engaging in the cost review process, as we are one step closer to meaningful action being taken. UULM-MD strongly encourages the Board to address health equity and make it a continued priority. We need to end disparities by race and ethnicity which persist for chronic conditions and lack of access to affordable medications. We also urge the Board to consider the enormous amount that drug corporations spend on advertising and self-enriching activities instead of on research and development when selecting drugs for cost review.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our faith perspective and to work with you to make a difference in Maryland. While we are still awaiting the Board's recommendations, we are impressed with its objectivity and the level of detail in its work. This gives us confidence that viable solutions will be recommended, but they must include benefits to all Marylanders. Please act quickly so that the expansion of the Board authority to make high-cost drugs affordable for all Marylanders can be considered in the 2025 legislative session.