

Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board  
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***Public Comment of Apostle Larry Lee Thomas for November 27, 2023 Board Meeting***

***COMAR 14.01.04 Cost Review Study Process***

I write today to thank you for the critical work this Board is doing to address high-cost drugs in Maryland. After decades of ministry with Empowering Believers Church and the United Black Clergy of Anne Arundel County, I have seen firsthand how the skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs have hurt our friends and neighbors across this great state. No parent, child, sibling, or spouse should face the agonizing situation of knowing a life-saving medication exists, but that it is unobtainable due to costs—yet this is a reality for so many. Even those fortunate enough to be able to afford these medications are often forced to make sacrifices in other areas of their lives. I myself have had to make difficult decisions on a daily basis in order to afford Eliquis, as I've watched my monthly costs for the drug climb from \$200 to over \$1,000 in the five years it has been prescribed to me. I know I am not alone in this struggle. For this reason, your work is critical in achieving health and prosperity for all Marylanders.

***“2024 General Session” Agenda Item***

In reviewing your Cost Review Study Process proposal, I am encouraged to see the commitment made to ensuring patient voices are an integral part of the process and appreciate the Board's considerations on impacts to health equity, as well. While I am eager to see how your initial work benefits state/local government budgets and taxpayers, it must be noted that so many Marylanders will still be left waiting for relief from high-cost drugs. It is critical that the Board's authority is expanded to address prescription drug affordability for *all* Marylanders. We cannot wait, because drugs don't work if people can't afford them. I urge you to include support for legislation to grant the Board statewide upper payment limit authority as a top priority for your 2024 MGA Session agenda.

Sincerely,

Apostle Larry Lee Thomas