

Community Input on the Rising Costs of Prescription Drugs: Marylanders Tell Their Stories

Vincent DeMarco, President
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative Education Fund

January 25, 2021

**HEALTH
CARE
for ALL**



The impact
of high-cost
prescription
drugs is
clear:

THE TRUE COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS



PATIENTS

One in four individuals report difficulty affording their prescription drugs.

45 million Americans did not fill a prescription in 2016 due to prohibitive costs.



PREMIUMS

In Maryland, CareFirst reports that prescription drugs account for 33% of every premium dollar spent -- the single largest contributor to their overall spending.



PUBLIC HEALTH

After price hikes of nearly 500% by some manufacturers, many health departments across the country struggle to afford naloxone.



**DRUGS DON'T WORK
IF PEOPLE CAN'T
AFFORD THEM.**

www.healthcareforall.com

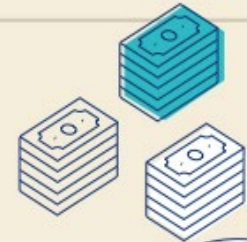
The problem continues to grow:

Despite a worsening pandemic that threatens the health and financial wellbeing of many, the pharmaceutical industry has continued to increase prices on existing drugs above the rate of inflation.

A recent Gallup poll found **9 out of 10** people worry that the pharmaceutical industry will use the COVID-19 pandemic to raise prices.

A CLOSER LOOK: THE JANUARY 2021 DRUG PRICE INCREASES

BIG PHARMA
HIKED THE PRICE OF
636 DRUGS
in the first week of January



99%
of hikes were
above the rate
of inflation



More than 100
drug companies hiked
prices on their products



4.99%
median
percent hike

95%
of hikes were on
brand-name drugs



#1

the best-selling drug in the world, Humira,
increased in price by 7.4%

Pfizer

the drug company with
the most hikes



**Most Costly for
Medicare:** Pharma
hiked the prices of the
top two most expensive
drugs for taxpayers

Revlimid
**\$4.6
billion**

Elquis
**\$7.3
billion**

2019 Medicare Spending

PATIENTS FOR AFFORDABLE DRUGS™

Community Forums

The Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative Education Fund (MCHIEF) hosted seven listening sessions around the state to gather community input on the rising costs of prescription drugs. The forums were designed to educate the public about the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, collect input from the public, and gather stories of Marylanders who have struggled with high-cost prescription drugs.

MCHI created an online form to solicit community input to share with the Board, which can be found at www.healthcareforall.com/RxInput



PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

HOWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY SENIOR FORUM ON RISING DRUG PRICES



With special guests
Howard County Executive Calvin Ball
Chair of Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board, Van Mitchell
Maryland AARP Associate Director of State Advocacy, Tammy Bresnahan
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative President, Vincent DeMarco

JANUARY 6, 2020
**ELLICOTT CITY
50+ CENTER**
12PM 9401 FREDERICK ROAD,
ELLICOTT CITY, MD
21042

Learn about
Maryland's new
Prescription Drug
Affordability
Board!

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

BALTIMORE COUNTY COMMUNITY SENIOR FORUM ON RISING DRUG PRICES



With special guests
Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski
Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board Member, Ebere Onukwughu
Maryland AARP Advocate, Jim Gutman
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative President, Vincent DeMarco

FEBRUARY 18, 2020
**OAK CREST
SENIOR LIVING
COMMUNITY**
6:30PM 8820 WALTHER BLVD.
PARKVILLE, MD 21234

Learn about
Maryland's new
Prescription Drug
Affordability
Board!

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

PREScription DRUG AFFORDABILITY TOWN HALL FORUM



HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER
STENY HOYER

CHARLES COUNTY
COMMISSIONER
PRESIDENT
REUBEN B.
COLLINS, II, ESQ.

PREScription DRUG
AFFORDABILITY
BOARD CHAIR
VAN MITCHELL

PREScription DRUG
AFFORDABILITY
BOARD MEMBER
PROFESSOR EBERE
ONUKWUGHU

MARYLAND AARP
ADVOCATE
JIM GUTMAN

MARYLAND SENATOR
ARTHUR ELLIS

DELEGATE
JOSELINE PERA-MELNYK

LEARN ABOUT MARYLAND'S
NEW PRESCRIPTION
DRUG AFFORDABILITY BOARD

9/23 @ 6PM

JOIN US FOR A FORUM DISCUSSION ON
RISING DRUG PRICES AND A CHANCE TO
SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH HIGH COST
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.

THIS EVENT IS
BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

MARYLAND
CITIZENS'
HEALTH
INITIATIVE
EDUCATION
FUND

HEALTH
CARE
for ALL

COPIE PUBLIC LIBRARY

HARFORD COUNTY

Virtual Community Forum on Rising Drug Prices



SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS



Barry Glassman
Harford County
Executive

Van Mitchell
Prescription Drug
Affordability Board Chair

Jim Gutman
Maryland AARP
Associate Director

Professor Ebere
Onukwughu
Prescription Drug
Affordability Board Member

Vincent DeMarco
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative
President

Senator
Brian Feldman

Delegate
Karen Lewis
Young

Join us for the
discussion &
share your
experience with
high cost
prescription drugs.

**MONDAY
NOVEMBER 2, 2020
3:00 - 4:30 P.M.**
ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE
To participate, register today!
Click Here

or Watch it live
<http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/DrugPriceForum>

LEARN ABOUT MARYLAND'S NEW PRESCRIPTION DRUG AFFORDABILITY BOARD

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

FREDERICK COUNTY COMMUNITY FORUM ON RISING DRUG COSTS

Special Guest Speakers



U.S. Congressman
Jamie Raskin

U.S. Congressman
David Trone

County Executive
Jan Gardner

Dr. Barbara
Brookmyer

Delegate
Karen Lewis
Young

Senator
Brian Feldman

Delegate
Joseline
Pera-Melnik

WEDNESDAY
**NOVEMBER 18
6:30-7:30PM**
ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

TO PARTICIPATE VIA ZOOM, VISIT:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/2U7IIBK](https://bit.ly/2U7IIBK)
THIS EVENT WILL BE LIVESTREAMED ON THE FCPL
FACEBOOK PAGE AT:
[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/FREDCOLIBRARY/](https://www.facebook.com/fredcolibrary/)

Join us for the
discussion and
share your story about high
cost prescription
drugs.

Hosted by:

FREDERICK
COUNTY
PUBLIC
LIBRARIES

HEALTH
CARE
for ALL

Prescription Drug Affordability Town Hall Forum

Monday, December 7, 7:00 p.m.



HEALTH
CARE
for ALL

& a Tele-Townhall with SiX

Key Findings

- Prescription drug affordability is a **significant concern for Marylanders** that spans income, age, and region.
- Marylanders were excited to learn that action is being taken to address prescription drug affordability on the state level; however, they would most like to **see real savings for individual consumers around the state**, not just state and local government entities.
- Participants **voiced frustrations with confusing formularies, a lack of transparency, and discrepancies in drug costs.**
- Marylanders would like the Board to **consider a variety approaches** to making prescription drugs more affordable and would like for the entire supply chain to be considered

What does
“affordability”
mean to you?

- “Affordability to me is a common-sense approach. Especially now with the pandemic and the loss of jobs. **I believe drug companies should take into consideration income or lack thereof for their patients.**”
- “Being able **to get the medication needed with or without insurance** assistance.”
- “Where **everyone who needs a prescription can have it filled.**”
- “The ability to **pay for prescriptions without causing a problem to pay for other necessities** such as mortgage/rent, food, utilities, etc.”
- “Affordability means not having to worry about whether you can afford to purchase and take the drug as prescribed, **without sacrificing other essentials in the household budget.**”
- “When it **doesn't cost more than \$100** in copays.”

What would you like to see the Board accomplish?

- “Price reductions on some of the most essential and commonly used medications such as insulin and epi pens... for people with life-threatening allergies, **having an epi-pen is not a 'luxury' or a chance that they should need to take.** Insulin has been around for many decades, virtually unchanged, so the rising cost is totally unwarranted and unacceptable.”
- “Define the goals of the Board and what their purpose is and making that well known. **Include addressing the prescription drug insurance confusion that directly impacts drug affordability.**”
- “Develop strategies that make COVID vaccine and other Rx affordable, available, and **account for Rx as part of entire course of treatment.**”
- “To determine a way to **make prescription drugs more affordable for Maryland residents.**”

Is there anything else you would like the Board to know or consider going forward?

- “There are drugs that are literally life saving and there are drugs that are required to manage conditions that would otherwise reduce the quality of life or cause surgeries. **They should start working on the first category of drugs but not lose track of the second category, which is just as important.**”
- “Please keep in mind that **more and more Americans are retiring with inadequate savings.** Most will not be able to afford the basics necessities.”
- “People with commercial insurance or no insurance do best when assistance is offered to help with drug expenses. Those of us with Part D Medicare seem to be left out. I would like to see more equality in drug costs. **Because I am in the coverage gap I am literally counting my pills to see if they will last until Jan 1st when my plan resets.**”
- “Please just **put the interests of the public ahead** of the interests of pharmaceutical companies.”

MARYLANDERS TELL THEIR STORIES

BURNELL B.

BETHESDA

"I take Ranexa 500mg twice a day and, even with my insurance company paying, I also have to pay \$267.00 out of pocket. I am retired and on a fixed income and this is way out of my range to afford. There is no way pharma company CEOs should become billionaires with the prices they are charging the American people."

"I'm on Social Security and support my grandchildren and daughter as well as myself. I get no financial assistance from anywhere. I have diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, acid reflux, allergies, and depression. I sometimes go months without the many prescriptions I need, I cannot afford the copays."

JANICE G.
PASADENA

ALLISON W.
GAITHERSBURG

We shouldn't have to crowdsource the medication that's keeping us alive.

PAT W.
ANNAPOLIS

"My granddaughter has three stage four cancers. She has to keep working to keep her health insurance. She can't drive anymore, her dad drives her to work. She can barely move without pain but she can't quit. Just one of her meds is \$1200 and there are lots more. She cries from pain and frustration but she is stuck between a rock and a hard place and nowhere to go. She can't keep it up much longer then what does she do? This is not right or moral."



Thank you to the partners who made these forums possible, including:



- Maryland AARP
- Action Now Initiative
- AIDS Health Foundation
- Charles County Public Library
- Ellicott City 50+Center
- Enoch Pratt Free Library
- Frederick County Public Library
- Oakcrest/Erickson Living
- Open Society Institute
- Patients for Affordable Drugs
- State Innovation Exchange
- The Impact Project

Thank you to the Prescription Drug Affordability Board Members for your participation in these forums.