

Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board
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Written Comment of Rosalyn Berkowitz, BSN, RN for December 18, 2023 Board Meeting.

I would like to address the everyday struggle that Marylanders go through in trying to obtain their prescribed medications. I have a 38-year-old daughter who was diagnosed with ADHD on October 6, 2020. As long as she was able to obtain her medication, she was able to function, to work, and to enjoy her life. It has been a struggle to get her Adderall since sometime last year. She has tried the available generics; however, they do not have the same effect. She spoke to several women in an online group she is in with other women with ADHD, and they all say the same thing. Two different psychiatrists she went to also said that the generic forms of Adderall did not have the same effect as the brand. They tried switching her to another medication which didn't work and gave her severe side effects. In October 2022, my daughter's ADHD spiraled out of control due to the inability to obtain Adderall. She has been unable to work since then, and she sits in her apartment all day. She has become a recluse. This is due to both the unavailability of the medication as well as the cost of the medication. It is not a medication that she takes because she wants to, it is a medication she takes because she must take it to function. A parent should never have to see their child suffer like this. It is unacceptable that this occurs in the United States of America.

I worked as a nurse both in the ICU (intensive care unit) and in the ER (emergency room). During that time, I saw many patients present to the hospital with very high blood sugars, some even so high that they were in DKA (diabetic ketoacidosis), a very serious condition. When I questioned them about why their blood sugar was so elevated, they often informed me that they were rationing their insulin because it was too expensive. I am retired, on Medicare with a supplement, and am also a diabetic. I now understand the problem, because I am in the same boat. Farxiga, a medication to protect the kidneys which is important for diabetics and can prevent future hospitalizations is around \$500 for a Month. I am also on Trulicity and Tresiba, which are equally expensive. My bill for medication in January 2023 was \$753.00. How is it possible for retirees to afford to pay for both their medication and their food?

On the website, Maryland.gov I found that 10.5 percent of adults in Maryland have diabetes, nearly 500,000. Also, 34 percent have prediabetes (approximately 1.6 million). If you could lower the cost of these medications, not only could you save many lives, you could also prevent many expensive hospitalizations.

Thank you,
Rosalyn Berkowitz, BSN, RN