

PATIENTS FOR AFFORDABLE DRUGS NOW™

March 20, 2018

Dear Mr. Speaker,

My name is David Mitchell. I am a cancer patient and Founder of Patients For Affordable Drugs NOW, a bipartisan group focused exclusively on policies to lower prescription drug prices. We do not accept funding from any organizations that profit from the development or distribution of prescription drugs. I write on behalf of patients in Ohio urging you to pass HB 479.

We have heard from over 1,700 Ohio patients struggling under high drug prices.

Mary Schimmoeller of Oak Harbor told us: "I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2015. When the doctor told me how much the prescription to keep my cancer at bay was going to cost, I said forget it, I will just die. I shouldn't have to live each day fearing when I will no longer be able to fill my prescription."

Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) are supposed to make drugs more affordable. Instead, PBMs retain a large share of the discounts and rebates they receive from drug manufacturers and reap profits by not passing them on to patients. HB 479 takes steps to fix this problem.

HB 479 prohibits health plans and PBMs from setting cost sharing amounts to exceed the cost of the medication without insurance. This change ensures that health plans and PBMs are not able to make unearned profits on the backs of patients. Patients trust their pharmacists to provide them with the best information about their medications, but some PBM contracts feature "gag clauses" that prohibit pharmacists from discussing lower-priced alternatives with patients. This bill prohibits gag clauses, ensuring pharmacists can aid patients in finding the most affordable medication.

Pharmacists are also kept in the dark about how PBM pricing will affect their business. PBMs often use "clawbacks" to charge pharmacists more for prescription drugs the pharmacist already sold to patients. Clawbacks affect patients as well by making it hard for pharmacists to stock or guarantee ready access to medications.

Ohioans are suffering under high drug prices. We hear from patients every day who must make heartbreaking decisions in order to afford their medications. They are cutting doses in half and skipping meals due to high drug prices. Patients For Affordable Drugs NOW urges you to move HB 479 forward and pass it this year. Drugs don't work if patients can't afford them.

Sincerely,



David Mitchell

Founder, Patients For Affordable Drugs Now