

April 7, 2021

To: Chair Tina Liebling and Chair Jennifer Schultz
Cc: House Health Finance and Policy Committee members
Re: Support for a Prescription Drug Affordability Board (HF 4076, Article 6)

We write to express our strong support for passing a Prescription Drug Affordability Board included in the House Health omnibus bill (HF 4076, Article 6).

In Minnesota, we believe everyone deserves access to the affordable medicine they need to be healthy and well. Nearly half (45%) of Minnesotans are worried about prescription drug costs, and one in five Minnesotans (21%) has rationed prescription medicine within the last two years due to cost (Healthcare Value Hub, Nov. 2020). Data shows pharmaceutical companies are continuing to hike up the price of certain drugs without support for an increase.

Access to affordable medicine can be a matter of life and death and it affects all of us. Without a tool like the Prescription Drug Affordability Board ("PDAB"), the entire state pays the price: costs show up in health insurance premiums as prescription drugs account for about 25% of premium costs. We all pay a public health toll when members of our community cannot afford the medicine they need, and Minnesotans across the state are paying the price with their lives and livelihoods.

The PDAB will have the authority to set upper payment limits for some high drug costs to help patients, payers, purchasers, and providers address the increasing challenge of high drug costs.

We have a track record of making progress on drug costs in Minnesota. Emergency insulin, PBM reform, and the Transparency Act must be the beginning, not the end of the state's work. We have a strong blueprint to work from the Attorney General's Task Force on Lowering Pharmaceutical Drug Costs, which made the PDAB one of their top policy recommendations to the Legislature. The task force included patients, experts, and a bipartisan group of legislators from the House and Senate.

As Minnesotans continue to be harmed by out-of-control prescription drug costs, the state has the legal authority to take meaningful action with broad public support. Eighty-seven percent of Minnesotans support this commonsense action. (Health Care Value Hub, Nov. 2020).

We urge you to pass and sign a Prescription Drug Affordability Board into law to lower prescription drug costs and save lives.

Signed,

Health Access MN
ISAIAH
Land Stewardship Project
Main Street Alliance
Minnesota AFL-CIO

Minnesota Farmers Union
National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter
National Multiple Sclerosis Society, MN Chapter
SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa
TakeAction Minnesota