

Minnesota House Judiciary Committee
March 5, 2021

Chairwoman Jamie Becker-Finn and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HF 801. I would like to ask that you vote no for the sake of Minnesota patients.

Many young adults my age suffer from depression. It's often hard to describe what living with depression is like, especially since there aren't always physical symptoms clear to others. But for me, prior to finding the correct medications, I felt constantly anxious, disengaged, and often hopeless. Activities that used to make me happy, like hanging out with friends and spending time outdoors didn't interest me anymore. Some days, it would even be difficult just to get out of bed.

Fortunately, I was able to find the right doctor who was able to diagnose me and prescribe life-changing anti-depressants. It took several months to find the best anti-depressant for me. Because of pharmaceutical innovation, when one medication didn't work for me, I had several other options to fit my needs. I felt like a new person when I started the medication I use now. I began seeing friends again, picking up old hobbies, and learning to enjoy every day. Nowadays, I'm excited to get up every morning and start my day.

But not every story is like mine. Millions of Minnesotans battle untreatable or undiagnosed mental health diseases every day. For the sake of those in need of new treatments and cures, we must prioritize drug discovery. Medications are not one-size-fits-all, which I learned on my personal journey. At the end of the day, everyone deserves to live life to the fullest and access to medications is a big part of that for so many of us.

While well intentioned, a bill like HF 801 that would put in place pricing restrictions on medications will actually turn out to be counterproductive in the long run by hampering biopharmaceutical innovation, the reason I am alive to write you this testimony.

Further, I am worried that the proposed "Prescription Drug Affordability Commission" will be comprised of only appointed members. Personally, I don't want a board of people whom I did not vote for deciding the future of healthcare in Minnesota.

Through COVID-19, we have seen that when scientific innovation is independent and supported, effective treatments can be delivered, and we can save lives. I agree we need to find ways to lower out of pocket cost for patients, but HF 801 is not the solution.

On behalf of patients like me, I again ask that you vote against HF 801.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Rachel Anderson