

Resolution No.:	<u>18-1015</u>
Introduced:	<u>January 16, 2018</u>
Adopted:	<u>January 23, 2018</u>

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Hucker
Co-Sponsors: Councilmembers Katz and Leventhal

SUBJECT: Prescription Drug Affordability Initiative

Background

1. To protect our lives and our well-being, every family in Maryland requires access to affordable prescription drugs.
2. Skyrocketing costs are making some medicines virtually inaccessible to our families and neighbors.
3. Overall drug prices increased almost 9% in 2016, while general inflation increased just over 2% in the same period. Since 2013, drug prices have risen an average of 10% annually, while inflation has averaged 1.2% annually since 2013.
4. Prescription drug spending accounted for over 22% of each health insurance premium dollar in 2014, and nearly a quarter of people in their deductible period never picked up their prescriptions from the pharmacy, partially because of cost.
5. There are pharmacy benefit managers who reportedly ban pharmacists from discussing lower-priced drug choices and payment options with their patients.
6. Maryland should continue to lead the nation in addressing the affordability of prescription drugs, building on the state's landmark 2017 legislation banning price gouging by manufacturers of generic and off-patent drugs.
7. A broad coalition of State and local activists are working to support the Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative calling for: (1) allowing pharmacists to provide information to consumers about lower cost drug options; (2) requiring prescription drug corporations to provide notice of new, expensive drugs, or large price increases of older drugs, as well as public justification for those pricing decisions; and, (3) making expensive drugs more affordable by creating a new Prescription Drug Cost Review Commission to establish payment rates for expensive drugs that create significant affordability problems for Marylanders, building upon Maryland's successful tradition of health care cost scrutiny.


Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following resolution:

The Council supports the goals of the Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative and calls on the State of Maryland to implement the following three commonsense ideas to improve our citizens' access to essential prescription drugs.

1. Allow pharmacists to provide information to consumers about lower cost drug options.
2. Require prescription drug corporations to provide notice of new, expensive drugs, or large price increases of older drugs, as well as public justification for those pricing decisions.
3. Make expensive drugs more affordable by creating a new Prescription Drug Cost Review Commission to establish payment rates for expensive drugs that create significant affordability problems for Marylanders, building upon Maryland's successful tradition of health care cost scrutiny.

This is a correct copy of Council action.


Megan Davey Limarzi, Esq.
Clerk of the Council