



53 Baxter Boulevard, Suite 202 | Portland, ME 04101  
Phone: 866-554-5380 | Fax: 207-775-5727 | TTY: 877-434-7598  
aarp.org/me | me@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpmaine  
facebook.com/aarpmaine | instagram.com/aarpme

April 12, 2021

## **Testimony in favor of LD 686, An Act To Increase Prescription Drug Pricing Transparency**

To the members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee,

My name is Mary Ann Cumming. I am 70 years old and I live in Standish, Maine. In 2019, I testified in front of this committee to share my story about how the high cost of prescription drugs has affected me. I am here again today to ask for your support of legislation that will address the unaffordable cost of prescription drugs. Today, I am testifying in support of LD 686 to increase transparency in the price of prescription drugs.

I am a breast cancer survivor and have other ongoing health issues that I need to manage through prescription drugs. The last time I came before this committee I shared my story related to a medication I was taking to prevent breast cancer from coming back. At that time, I had three options for medication, two I could not take due to their side effects. My only option was a prescription that started at \$789 a month, which I took for three and a half years. By year three, that prescription was \$365 a month or \$12.19 cents per pill.

Today, I no longer take that medication but I am still plagued by the high cost of prescription drugs. In February, I was diagnosed with a blood clot in my lung. I was prescribed Xarelto, a drug that costs \$400 to \$600 for a 30-day supply, to dissolve the clot. Between going back and forth with my insurance company and the manufacturer, the cost will now be \$245 for a three-month supply.

I am not complaining – I'm glad I am able to afford the medication – but we need a better control system so all of us can afford these drugs that we must take in order to stay healthy. In some cases, these drugs are literally keeping us alive.

The truth is, at the end of the day we all pay, even if we have insurance. As the cost of the drugs go up, the insurance pays more and eventually so do the patients by way of additional co-pays and higher premiums and deductibles. There seems to be no end to it. What if it becomes unaffordable? What necessities will I need to go without?

Pharmaceutical companies won't offer me an answer that makes sense. Patients shouldn't have to play a game of calling their insurance companies, manufacturers and others to find an affordable option. So I turn to you, our state legislators, to stand up for us and to fight these terrible costs that are literally stealing our joy and sometimes our lives. We shouldn't be making

decisions about cutting our pills in half or going without food. You know and I know that thousands of Mainers are doing just that. It is time to stop the prescription drug price-gouging and demand a better way to keep these necessary medications within reach.

I am asking you to support LD 686, to further efforts to lower prescription drug prices for the Mainers who need them.

Thank you.

Mary Ann Cumming

Standish