



**Testimony of Jess Maurer on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the Committee on
Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services**

**In Favor of LD LD 686
An Act to Increase Prescription Drug Pricing Transparency**

Delivered on April 13, 2021

Greetings Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.

My name is Jess Maurer, and I'm the Executive Director of the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA). The MCOA is a broad, multidisciplinary network of more than 100 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older Mainers working together to make sure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age in our homes and communities. We are in favor of LD 686.

Prescription medications are often a key component to older people maintaining good health and remaining active in work and community life. Consumers pay more out-of-pocket for their prescription drugs than they do for any other kind of health care, and the price of drugs can be confusing. A trip to the pharmacy may result in a drug purchase that costs less than \$10, or one that costs more than \$100.

Health care professionals can try to prescribe patients the lowest cost drug available to treat health problems. However, when costs for life-saving drugs like insulin skyrocket, or a doctor prescribes a new expensive inhaler, an older person on a low, fixed income may not be able to absorb the costs. This leaves too many older people having to make the choice between food and heat, or needed medications.

At least 75% of older people in Maine are taking prescription medications for chronic conditions, but those medications are only effective when patients can afford to get and use them. Many times, patients may ration an inhaler, or not adhere to the necessary drug regimen because of the cost, risking life-threatening problems and avoidable trips to the hospital. We must build a system of price transparency in prescription drug pricing so that lower income patients and their health care professionals can find the best prescription drug option that matches the patient's needs and ability to pay.

Prices for prescription drugs most commonly used by older people have increased 10 times faster than the rate of inflation, making these medications unattainable for too many older Mainers. Transparency in drug prices will enable providers to prescribe, and patients to access, less expensive alternatives. Requiring pharmaceutical manufacturers to produce and post a list of price changes on its publicly accessible website is a positive step toward making the cost of healthcare more transparent. We urge you to support of LD 686. Thank you.

Jess Maurer
207-592-9972