



**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 1117  
An Act to Prevent Excessive Prices for Prescription Drugs**

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. I am providing testimony in favor of LD 1117.

Prescription medications are often a key component to older people maintaining good health and remaining active in work and community life. Unfortunately, consumers pay more out-of-pocket for their prescription drugs than they do for any other kind of health care. In 2020 retail rates for 460 prescription drugs increased by 5.2 percent - double the rate of inflation.

More than three-quarters of older people take prescription medications for chronic conditions. 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 simply cannot absorb the costs. Instead, she either has to go without the drugs as prescribed or go without heat, food and other necessities. These practices are not healthy or uncommon, and are certainly not sustainable for Maine people. These issues will not go away on their own; only systemic change will make a difference.

About 75,000 Mainers over 65 do not have enough money to meet their basic needs, but don't qualify for any means tested programs, like the Medicare Savings Program. Most of these Mainers won't be able to afford a dramatic increase in the cost of a prescription drug they are taking, and many may have to discontinue use. Medications are only effective if patients can afford to get and use them.

LD 1117 prohibits excessive price increases for generic and off-patent prescription drugs sold in this State. The bill makes prescription drug manufacturers who violate the provisions subject to enforcement action by the Attorney General. This bill is critical to ensuring people of all ages can access the prescription medications they need to keep them healthy and productive.

Thank you.

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