



The Maryland State Medical Society

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GOV. HOGAN HAS OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE IN MD

Op-Ed in The Baltimore Sun by Gene Ransom, MedChi CEO

BALTIMORE, April 27, 2019 — Gov. Larry Hogan has a proven track record of innovative and bipartisan leadership on the health care issue. Under his direction, Maryland's unique Medicare All Payer hospital waiver was extended, leading to increased care coordination and decreased health care costs. Mr. Hogan's team also oversaw a Federal 1332 waiver application and approval to stabilize the Maryland Health Insurance Exchange. That waiver, combined with Mr. Hogan's approval of the General Assembly's wise action to pass a reinsurance bill last year, has helped cut premiums in the individual market by 30 percent. Governor Hogan has now been given yet another opportunity to improve health care in Maryland with two pieces of bipartisan landmark legislation that have landed on his desk for consideration.

The first bill responds to the disturbing reality that many Marylanders simply cannot afford necessary prescription drugs. We hear story after story about skyrocketing drug costs and families who go without the medications they need. Even so, Congress has failed to act.

That's why the Maryland General Assembly stepped up to pass a bill that will begin to bring down the costs of some of the most expensive drugs. This bill creates the nation's first Prescription Drug Affordability Board, which will serve the public by reviewing drug costs in the state and setting fair and affordable maximum costs for certain drugs. The board, with the approval of top legislative leaders, will have the authority to establish maximum costs that state and local governments pay for certain expensive drugs they buy for their employees.

Soaring drug costs for employees are eating up a rising share of state and local spending. By bringing down the costs of some expensive drugs, the board will help government agencies save money on drugs and free up additional tax funding to pay for other priorities, such as education. The board will also carefully assess drug costs in the state and make recommendations to policymakers about how to do more to make drugs more affordable overall, an important step forward.

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.

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