

Testimony of Stephen J Rockower, M.D.

Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Stephen J Rockower. I am currently the president of MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society, representing almost 7000 physicians across the state of Maryland. We are here today to support and encourage passage of Senate Bills 415 and 437.

Prescription drugs have gotten much too expensive in Maryland and elsewhere, as manufacturers are jacking up prices to astronomical levels just because they can. We have all heard of the unconscionable pricing of Daraprim, the generic antibiotic that had its pricing raised from \$13 per pill to \$750 by Turing Pharmaceuticals and its CEO, Martin Shkreli. There are numerous other examples, including EpiPens, Naloxone, Vimovo(a combination of 2 cheap generic arthritis drugs), Diabetic test strips, and this week we hear of another, deflazacort, an old steroid drug that has been shown useful for a rare muscular disease, Duchenne muscular dystrophy. The old price: \$100 per month. The new price: \$7500 per month. With special discounts, it goes way down to \$4500 per month! Some discount!

These bills, when enacted by our legislature, would provide the transparency needed for the public and the administration to be able to document the price increases and provide needed exposure to keep them under control. For egregious cases, the Attorney General is being given the ability to seek judicial relief for the benefit of the Maryland Medicaid Program.

For the protection of the citizens of Maryland the physicians of MedChi urge the favorable reporting of these two bills.