

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, for giving me the opportunity to speak here today.

When I have conversations with constituents in town halls, coffee shops, and businesses across Virginia's Seventh District, almost no concern comes up more consistently than the rising cost of prescription drugs. In addition to factors like growing premiums and surprise hospital billing, the rising cost of medication has forced many working families and seniors to make unsafe choices in order to stay within their budget. In [a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll](#), researchers found that more than a quarter of American adults report not taking their medication as prescribed during the past year because of cost. For seniors and those battling chronic illness, this choice is simply unaffordable.

I came to the House with a clear directive from my district to work on lowering the cost of prescription drugs, but the issues we are seeing in the healthcare marketplace are not isolated to Central Virginia. In every one of our districts, access to quality, affordable healthcare is a struggle for far too many working families, veterans, seniors, and employers. We can start tackling this crisis by addressing transparency.

The many steps and processes that go into setting the price for life-saving prescription medication are so opaque that it's difficult for doctors, patients, and policymakers to figure out where price hikes are coming from. For this reason, I was proud to introduce the bipartisan *Public Disclosure of Drugs Discounts Act*, with Representatives Jodey Arrington and Brendan Boyle, to bring more transparency to the role of pharmacy benefit managers (or PBMS) in the prescription drug market.

Currently, [the three largest PBMs control nearly three-quarters of the U.S. prescription drug market](#), exerting enormous influence over the final pricing of the medications that make it to consumers in Central Virginia and beyond.

Our bipartisan bill would require PBMs to publicly report their rebates, discounts, and price concessions, so that patients, doctors, and employers have the opportunity to understand how prescription prices are impacted by PBMs.

Passing legislation that increases transparency in the prescription drug industry is a crucial first step to figuring out why prices are rising and what we can do about it. I thank the committee for your careful consideration of our bipartisan bill as part of the *Prescription Drug STAR Act*. I was proud to see this bill pass unanimously out of the Ways and Means Committee, and I'll keep fighting to bring it to the House floor.

Another priority should be tackling the federal limitations that prevent Medicare from negotiating directly with pharmaceutical companies. Currently, the federal government cannot negotiate drug prices within Medicare Part D, despite [a recent U.S. Senate committee report](#) that shows prices of the 20 most commonly-prescribed brand-name drugs for seniors increasing 10 times faster than the average annual rate. The number of prescriptions written for these drugs is decreasing, but the total sales revenue from these prescriptions is skyrocketing, and seniors are paying the difference.

Empowering Medicare to negotiate will increase competition and drive down costs for seniors in Central Virginia and across the country.

My third priority is increasing competition. There are several avenues the House could take to increase competition in the prescription drug market. For example, we can combat the upward pressure on drug prices by cracking down on the predatory, anti-competitive practices that pharmaceutical companies use to prevent cheaper, generic options from reaching consumers.

I was proud to cosponsor and vote with a majority of the House to pass the bipartisan *CREATES Act*, and I hope to see the Senate take up this critical legislation very soon.

At its core, affordable healthcare is a deeply personal, human issue. We are all invested in solving the problem of unaffordable prescription drugs, because we've listened to our constituents, friends, and family, and we know the overwhelming burden they face in getting the medication they need to lead healthy lives.

I thank the committee for its work thus far on this issue, and I look forward to continuing to work with members of this committee and anyone who is committed to getting practical prescription drug legislation to a full vote on the U.S House floor.

Thank you.