



Lower Costs for Prescription Drugs

An Act relative to pharmaceutical access, costs and transparency (SB.749)

Lead Sponsor: Sen. Friedman

An Act to ensure prescription drug cost transparency and affordability (HB.945)

Lead sponsor: Rep. Barber

An Act to reduce co-pays for people with chronic conditions (HB.943)

Lead Sponsor: Rep. Barber

Why is legislation needed?

Individuals and families in Massachusetts continue to struggle with high and rising prescription drug costs, cutting into household budgets and negatively impacting health outcomes.

- Nearly one in four residents ([22%](#)) indicated they did not fill a prescription, cut pills in half or skipped a dose because they couldn't afford it.
- Prescription drug spending continues to rise, outpacing other health care spending in Massachusetts. Prescription drug spending [grew 7.7%](#) in 2020 – more than twice the overall state benchmark of 3.1% – even after taking into account rebates.
- To date, hospitals, insurers, businesses, providers, and consumers have all played a significant role in both ensuring health care coverage for residents and helping bring down costs, while the pharmaceutical industry has not been part of the solution.

Why is this a health equity issue?

- Black and Hispanic/Latinx residents were significantly [more likely](#) to cut pills in half, skip a dose, or not fill a prescription due to cost (36% and 33%) than white residents (19%) in Massachusetts.
- People of Color are [disproportionately impacted](#) by chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, and hypertension, and those who cannot afford their medication are at greater risk for health complications.

What does this legislation do?

- **Eliminates or reduces co-pays for certain medications for three chronic conditions that disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income communities: diabetes, asthma, heart conditions.**
 - Eliminates co-pays for one generic medication for each of the three conditions.
 - Caps co-pays at \$25 for at least one brand name medication for each of the three conditions including insulin.
- **Expands the Health Policy Commission's authority to conduct affordability reviews of certain prescription drugs in the private market**, building on the successful MassHealth drug pricing policy passed in the FY20 state budget, to hold drug manufacturers accountable for addressing the cost of certain high-cost drugs.
- **Increases oversight of pharmacy benefit managers** through state licensure.
- **Authorizes the Center for Health Information and Analysis to collect a drug cost information** from pharmaceutical manufacturers and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) to help the state better understand cost growth drivers for prescription drugs.

For more information, please contact Health Care For All:

Alex Sheff asheff@hcfama.org or Ashley Blackburn ablackburn@hcfama.org