



STATE of RHODE ISLAND
Executive Department
GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
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Legislative Impact Statement

To: Senator Murry, Chair
From: Elisabeth Hubbard, Executive Secretary
Re: 26 Senate 2876 AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFITS

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

The Governor's Commission on Disabilities' Legislation Committee has developed a Legislative Impact Statement on the bill listed below. The Commission would be pleased to present testimony to the committee. Please contact me (462-0110) if testimony is desired or for additional information.

Caps the total amount that a covered person is required to pay for a covered prescription asthma inhaler to twenty-five (\$25) per thirty (30) day supply.

Legislation Committee finds this bill Beneficial

Asthma is a critical illness in Rhode Island. Our state has the highest rate of adult asthma in the country (12.6% of the adult population).

https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/most_recent_data_states.htm

For people who have these conditions, having access to the medications to treat them are essential. Without them, they are unable to breath. Lack of access to medication can lead to unnecessary (and costly) hospitalization and even death. The extremely high cost of these medications is a contributing factor to people not taking their medication, or rationing it and not maintaining a therapeutic level for their condition.

"Individuals with CPD [chronic pulmonary disease] and high out-of-pocket inhaler costs are at increased risk for CRN [cost-related medication nonadherence] relative to individuals on other medications. Physicians should be aware that inhalers can pose a particularly high risk of medication nonadherence for some patients." *Inhaler Costs and Medication Nonadherence Among Seniors with Chronic Pulmonary Disease*. Peter Castaldi, MD William Rogers, PhD. Dana Safran, ScD, and Ira M. Wilson, MD; Chest 4/23/2010

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2940068/>

Capping the copayment for these medications will remove this barrier and help those with CPD to maintain their medication dose. This will lead to fewer adverse health outcomes and hospitalizations. More importantly, people who have access their medication will be able to breath better and engage more fully in their lives.

The United States Senate launched an investigation into the prices of these medications. There are concerns about the ability of Americans to pay for these medications, especially as they are offered for far less in other countries. For more information, you can read the press release and the letters to the pharmaceutical companies here:

<https://www.help.senate.gov/chair/newsroom/press/news-chairman-sanders-baldwin-lujan-markey-launch-help-committee-investigation-into-efforts-by-pharmaceutical-companies-to-manipulate-the-price-of-asthma-inhalers>

cc: Rico Vota, Governor's Office of Legislative Affairs