

10 March 2025

[submitted electronically via: slegislation@rilegislature.gov]

The Honorable Melissa Murray Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee

State House

82 Smith Street

Providence, RI 02903

RE: S 2876 – AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFITS

Dear Chair Murray, and Members of Senate HHS:

My name is Matthew Pari, and I am a Doctor of Pharmacy student at the University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy and a resident of Scituate, Rhode Island. I also serve as a Student Representative on the Rhode Island Pharmacists Association Council. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this legislation.

I am writing in strong support of S 2876, which would cap the out-of-pocket cost for prescription inhalers, prescription devices, and equipment used to administer inhaled medications at \$25 per thirty-day supply. This bill also has a companion measure in the House, H 7948.

My perspective on this issue began before entering pharmacy school. For three years after graduating high school, I worked in a retail pharmacy, where I frequently saw patients surprised by the high cost of basic inhalers such as albuterol. It is concerning that a medication intended to treat an acute asthma attack can still be financially out of reach for many patients.

This issue is also personal to me. Growing up with asthma, I know that an inhaler is not optional during an attack. When cost prevents patients and children from accessing these medications, manageable conditions can quickly become medical emergencies.

In my current role as a Pharmacy Intern at Westerly Hospital, I conduct medication reconciliations for newly admitted patients. In these conversations, I often hear patients say they once had an inhaler but no longer have it, or that they ran out and never obtained a refill. I also frequently see that many hospitalized patients rely on at least one, and often multiple, inhalers to manage their respiratory conditions. When patients are unable to access or maintain these medications, their conditions can worsen and lead to preventable emergency care or hospitalization.

As a future pharmacist, my goal is to ensure patients have access to the medications they need to manage their health. By capping inhaler costs at \$25, Rhode Island can improve access to life-saving medications and help protect the health of Rhode Islanders.

I respectfully urge you to support S 2876. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew Pari

PharmD & MBA Candidate 2027

Student Representative, Rhode Island Pharmacists Association

Scituate, Rhode Island