

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 Sami Gangji and I am a student pharmacist at the University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy from East Greenwich. I write in strong support S 2876 which would cap the out-of-pocket cost for prescription inhalers, prescription divide, and prescription equipment used to administer inhaled medications at \$25 per thirty-day supply. This also has a House companion, H 7948.

As a student pharmacist, I have seen firsthand working in community pharmacies how the cost of inhalers can create barriers for patients trying to manage their asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). I have spoken with patients at the pharmacy counter who are surprised with the high price of their inhaler and often express concerns about being able to afford it. Sometimes, patients will have to delay picking up their medications for themselves or their children just because the cost is too high. One time, a parent had to switch a medication for her child due to an insurance change, which was really worrying them because of having to relearn a new technique. All of these situations make adherence more difficult for patients and can lead to improper inhaler technique, worsening symptom control, and ultimately more emergency room visits and hospitalizations that could have been prevented.

This legislation is important to me both personally and professionally because it addresses a challenge I have seen firsthand. Pharmacists are often the most accessible healthcare provider, and are frequently helping patients learn how to use their inhaler correctly, answering questions about medications, and finding ways to make treatments more affordable. As I continue my training and prepare to enter practice, I hope to help patients better manage their chronic respiratory diseases. S 2876 would make this much easier by reducing the financial barriers that prevent patients from accessing the medications they rely on to breathe and live healthier lives.

Thank you for your consideration on this important piece of legislation to improve access to essential medications for Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Sami Gangji

Doctor of Pharmacy Candidate

East Greenwich, RI