



— NATIONAL —  
**MINORITY QUALITY**  
— FORUM —

January 31, 2024

RE: Written Testimony for House Committee on Health and Human Services February 1, 2024 hearing for HB 570 by Delegate Delaney.

The National Minority Quality Forum (NMQF) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit research and advocacy organization based in Washington, DC. The mission of NMQF is to reduce patient risk by assuring optimal care for all. Our vision is an American health services research, delivery and financing system whose operating principle is to reduce patient risk for amenable morbidity and mortality while improving quality of life. NMQF is committed to reducing patient risk and ensuring equitable access to beneficial treatment and care for Virginians and communities nationwide.

The National Minority Quality Forum is writing to you to share our concerns that a Virginia Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB) may only serve to impede the progress toward achieving health care equity for all Virginians. Price setting policies that accompany the PDAB such as an upper payment limit (UPL) increase risks for amenable morbidity and mortality for patients who depend on Medicaid to assure effective and consistent access to prescription medications to manage their health. UPLs limit reimbursement to hospitals, doctors, and pharmacists who dispense drugs deemed the most effective to help patients manage a chronic condition. While healthcare systems that serve a patient mix with higher-income levels may be able to withstand the losses from the lack of reimbursements, hospitals that are responsible for disenfranchised communities may not.

Ensuring the affordability of high quality, efficacious medications is essential to the elimination of inequities in health care and outcomes. This affordability must not be effectuated by promulgating public policy that increases the health and financial costs vulnerable populations and communities in Virginia, particularly rural, Black and brown communities who are reliant upon and equity-centric public policy construct. Price setting policies that confound access to care are a barrier to inclusion in data collection and investment in research efforts that improve the quality of care for historically excluded populations.

In closing, the National Minority Quality Forum shares your concerns regarding the need to assure that Virginia's health care safety net is financially viable; however, that financial viability must not service to compromise the health and financial security of Medicaid beneficiaries. We would welcome an opportunity to partner with the Commonwealth of Virginia to explore effective and sustainable policy avenues to improving the quality and outcomes of care for all Virginians.

If you have any questions regarding this public comment, please direct them to Gretchen C. Wartman, NMQF Vice President for Policy and Program ([gwartman@nmqf.org](mailto:gwartman@nmqf.org)).

Sincerely,

Gary A. Puckrein, PhD  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Minority Quality Forum