



Tigerlily
Foundation
Beauty. Strength. Transformation.

February 1, 2024

RE: The Negative Impact of Proposed Drug Affordability Board on Virginians Living with Cancer

To Honorable Members of the Virginia House Committee on Labor and Commerce:

Tigerlily Foundation is a national women's health and oncology organization dedicated to education, advocacy, and hands-on support for young women before, during, and after cancer focusing on eradicating the disparities of age, stage and color. I write to you today to express our organization's concerns over [House Bill 570](#), legislation that would establish a prescription drug affordability board (PDAB) in Virginia. **Establishing a PDAB in Virginia will block access to essential medicines that Virginians rely on to manage symptoms and lead healthier lives, particularly for patients living with cancer and other complex and chronic conditions and further exasperate already existing health inequities rather than helping move progress forward towards health equity.**

Prescription drug price setting policies that often accompany PDABs, such as upper payment limits (UPLs), fail to protect access to timely and effective care and can actually increase risks for patients who need consistent access to medications to manage their health. UPLs limit reimbursement for hospitals, doctors, and pharmacists who dispense effective treatments that help patients manage a chronic condition. As a result of the proposed PDAB, Virginia patients could be forced to search elsewhere to access medications they need and could end up forgoing critical treatments altogether, which can lead to adverse health consequences including death and higher medical costs in the future. In addition, establishing a PDAB in Virginia could divert critical research resources elsewhere and have a chilling effect on the development of new medicines for patients who have limited or no treatment options today for their condition. Furthermore, any proposed PDAB should be designed to include patients and be representative of those populations. This would also include patient advocacy organizations as community advisory representatives of the Virginia House so that we ensure that these and future recommendations include all stakeholders.

For patients who are diagnosed with complex cancers like triple negative breast cancer (TNBC), an especially hard-to-treat type of breast cancer that has limited treatment options and is diagnosed in Black and Hispanic women at younger ages and later stages, timely and equitable access to medications and treatments prescribed by one's physician is critical. However, drug price controls can unintentionally threaten vital pathways for patients to access cutting-edge medicines that can help them survive illnesses.

While we commend the Virginia General Assembly and other elected leaders in Virginia for exploring solutions that alleviate health care access and affordability challenges and reduce health disparities, any policy solution must not come at the expense of vulnerable communities in Virginia, particularly Black and brown communities who already face disproportionate barriers. TNBC, among other cancers and chronic conditions, disproportionately affects Black women, and establishing a PDAB in Virginia would have disastrous consequences on access to care, future innovative treatments, and efforts to achieve health equity.



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On behalf of the communities that the Tigerlily Foundation serves, we thank you for your leadership in seeking policy solutions to address barriers to care that Virginia patients continue to face. However, HB 570 falls short of that goal. On behalf of our community and as an 18 year survivor of TNBC myself and a Virginia resident, I thank you for your consideration of our concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at maimah@tigerlilyfoundation.org if Tigerlily Foundation can be a resource to you and your staff.

Sincerely,

Maimah Karmo
Founder & CEO
Tigerlily Foundation