



Testimony on 958 CMR 12.00 – Drug Pricing Review

Michael Rubenstein

Greater Boston Interfaith Organization Health Care Action Team Co-Chair

Public Hearing of the Health Policy Commission

December 13, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Good afternoon Commissioner Cohen, Director Seltz, other commissioners and members of the Health Policy Commission staff,

I am Michael Rubenstein, co-chair of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization Healthcare Action Team. The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, or GBIO, is comprised of 41 dues paying institutions representing over 45,000 people in Greater Boston.

GBIO is here, with Health Care for All, the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action and other members of the Massachusetts Prescription Drug Affordability Coalition, to voice our support of the regulations you have drafted. We believe the strong regulations will help people by lowering prescription drug costs for MassHealth, thereby freeing resources to better serve the people of Massachusetts.

GBIO is also here today to stand up for a set of values that expressed in our laws and regulations. It is our hope that you continue to keep these values in mind and ensure that they are faithfully embodied as you finalize proposed regulation 958 CMR 12.00.

We value **transparency** in how the prices of goods and services purchased by the government on our behalf are established. In particular, when government research is used as the foundation for new medicines, we want the impact of our tax dollars used to pay for that research to be appropriately recognized.

We value **the opportunity to participate as citizens**, through public hearings and other testimony, to ensure that our perspectives are incorporated in your publication of reasonable prices for unreasonably priced drugs.

We value **clarity** in the regulations so that the values they embody are recognized and acted upon by future regulators.

And, while we value the ability for individuals and businesses to make reasonable profits on the products and services they sell,

that ability loses its value when it is distorted by a market structured with unfair rules. When a seller inflates the cost of life-saving products due to their own control of the supply and a buyer's inability to negotiate, it is time for our government to act on the buyer's behalf.

We have shared many stories of why the government needs to act. Chris, and many other people with diabetes are unable to rely on access to life-saving insulin. Faith had to ration her husband's kidney medication because she couldn't come up with the \$353 for a 10-day supply as his pills ran out before the end of the month. Most importantly, so many of us are unable to get the care we need through MassHealth as millions of dollars are diverted to pay unreasonable prices for expensive prescription drugs.

GBIO and the other members of the Massachusetts Prescription Drug Affordability Coalition are grateful for your action today. It is our hope that, as you finalize these regulations, you keep the values of transparency, citizen participation, clarity and fairness as they are faithfully executed now and in the future.

Thank you.