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Statement by Lora Pellegrini, President and CEO of the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans, on Joint Committee on Financial Services hearing on prescription drug legislation
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As increases in prescription drug prices continue to raise health care costs for employers and consumers and threaten the state's health care cost growth benchmark, MAHP and our member health plans remain focused on health care affordability.

Our member health plans are strong supporters of legislation that holds pharmaceutical companies accountable for the high cost of prescription drugs and we support increased transparency relative to the factors contributing to price increases. It is imperative that pharmaceutical manufacturers be held to the same transparency and accountability standards required for health plans and providers in the Commonwealth. This includes keeping costs in line with the state's cost growth benchmark and requiring pharmaceutical manufacturers to participate at the annual Health Policy Commission Cost Trends Hearings. Without accountability, drug manufacturers have benefited from years of unchecked cost growth, threatening the state's ability to meet the benchmark.

The most recent Health Policy Commission report found that since 2014, prescription drug prices have risen 33%, 20 times faster than the rate of inflation and outpacing price increases for any other medical commodity or service. Through the first three weeks of January 2023, drugmakers raised prices on at least 587 brand name drugs and on roughly 985 total products.

Health plans have limited tools to direct members to safe, effective, and lower cost drugs. The pharmaceutical industry is focused on removing these tools to drive members to new, high cost drugs, when in fact there are lower cost drugs on the market today that may be equally as effective. Legislation that seeks to eliminate consumer cost-sharing and take away health plan utilization management tools fail to address the underlying costs of pharmaceutical drugs and will instead remove important tools that ensure patient safety and affordability.

We must continue to shine a bright light on prescription drug pricing and hold drug companies accountable for the soaring prices they set. We stand prepared to work with the legislature to address the underlying costs of drugs, and strongly support transparency and oversight provisions to hold pharmaceutical manufacturers accountable for the prices charged.