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RE: Support for H.F. 801

February 22, 2021

Madame Chair and committee members,

TakeAction Minnesota is a grassroots organization representing 55,000 individual Minnesotans and 22 organizational members across the state organizing for justice and democracy. We are writing in support of H.F. 801.

Out of control prescription drug costs are a growing concern of TakeAction Minnesota members. Across the state, we hear worries and horror stories from our members:

- A brother-in-law who died rationing insulin at 48 years old because he started a new job and couldn't access health insurance until after a 6-month probationary period;
- A young person unable hold down steady work since they can't afford the prescriptions drugs they need to be healthy;
- A man on a fixed income paying \$250 per month for essential medicine that costs \$20 in other countries;
- A woman with a rare disease treated by Xyrem, a drug developed by publicly funded research and costs \$192,000 per year;
- A woman in 70s paying \$5,500 per year for prescription medicine;
- A graduate student whose life fell apart when they stopped taking their bipolar medication because they couldn't afford to pay \$700 per month.

A Healthcare Value Hub survey of Minnesotans in November 2020 found that 21% of respondents had cut a pill or skipped a dose due to cost pressures, and up and down the income scale many were afraid they won't be able to afford their prescriptions soon.¹ Meanwhile national polling² from January 2021 shows that more than half of voters are more concerned with pharmaceutical prices than they were prior to the pandemic, and 70% think pharmaceutical companies continue to put profits over people and that government action is necessary.

Drugs don't work if people can't afford them. We strongly support the establishment of a Prescription Drug Affordability Board.

Kenza Hadj-Moussa
Public Affairs Director

¹ Minnesota Residents Worried about High Cost of Drugs—Support Range of Government Solutions, Altarum Health Care Value Hub Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey, December 2020.

² <https://www.csrpx.org/csrpx-poll-americans-expect-new-administration-congress-to-act-on-out-of-control-drug-prices-hold-big-pharma-accountable/>