

**Written Testimony
Stahis Panagides
Bethesda, MD
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Chairwoman Senator Debbie Stabenow, Vice Chairman Senator Joe Manchin, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my story here.

My name is Stahis Panagides.

I am here today as a Marylander, Parkinson's patient, and Medicare recipient who has been affected by the high prices of prescription drugs.

I am 80 years old and worked for years at the World Bank, the Organization of American States, the Ford Foundation, and at private sector companies. From 2005 to 2011, I served as the Resident Country Director of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (the MCC) in the Republic of Cape Verde. I have devoted my career to serving the interests of people everywhere and especially of this our country. And I am proud of my service. I am proud also of my family, my wife, three children and five grandchildren.

Three years ago, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease for which there is no known cure. The effects of the disease can be mitigated through combinations of medicines. I am grateful for the innovation that has made treatment for Parkinson's possible, but such innovation is worthless if people like me can't afford the drugs it brings.

A few months ago, my neurologist recommended the new drug, Rytary, an extended-release medication approved by the FDA in 2015. I was shocked to learn that it would cost me \$400 plus per month (which is close to \$5,000 yearly). Rytary was the medication my doctor felt would work best to treat my disease, but I had to reject the possibility of taking it entirely because I could not afford it.

I have robust medical insurance with Medicare A+B, and supplemental coverage through the Mutual of Omaha at a yearly premium of \$4,332 in addition to Express Scripts Medicare D.

It never occurred to me that even on these plans I may not be able to afford my medications. Yet today, at 80 years old, I cannot follow the course of treatment that my doctor recommends because of the cost of my medication on Medicare.

I am grateful that prescription drug prices are starting to get the attention they deserve on Capitol Hill. I am supportive of legislation that would allow Medicare to negotiation for more affordable drugs prices and hope that Congress will fight for real change for patients like me.

Thank you for your time.