

Members of the Senate Health Care, Human Services & Rural Health Policy Committee -

I'm writing today regarding Senator Bill 1570 – which requires medical assistance coverage of prescription drugs that are immunosuppressant drugs or drugs for treatment of seizures, cancer, HIV or AIDS.

As I testified (via phone) earlier this year on a different bill (SB 1507 - HIV Screening) in front of the Health Care, Human Services, & Rural Health Policy Committee – the NIH has shown that access to early treatment can reduce the likelihood of an HIV positive person infecting their partners by 96%. For the first time, after 20 years of living with HIV – I believe I can see an end to this epidemic, but it will only happen through expansion of testing and access to treatment.

Key to this effort is ensuring HIV-positive folks get the right treatment at the right time, as it is only when we can suppress an HIV-positive persons viral load to undetectable that we prevent the new infections.

As the largest and oldest AIDS Service Organization in Oregon, serving over 1600 people a year with HIV, Cascade AIDS Project urges your support on SB 1570. Please help us ensure required medical assistance coverage for treatments that can both prolong the lives of the more than 5,000 Oregonians living with HIV, but also help prevent new infections.

I hope we can rely on you as an ally in fighting the AIDS epidemic.

Sincerely

Michael Kaplan