



# African American Health Coalition, Inc.

*"A healthy community starts with you!"*

February 10, 2012

Senator Jackie Winters  
R-Salem  
District 10  
900 Court St. NE, S-301  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill 1570

My name is Corliss McKeever and I am the President & CEO of the African American Health Coalition, Inc located in Portland, OR. I would like to address Senate Bill 1570, which will affect my organizations primary group.

I am writing in support of this bill. I believe patient protection is important. African Americans make up for approximately 25,000 Medicaid enrollees, whom will be protected if this bill passes.

Open access to medication is essential for the effective management of HIV/AIDS and for the prevention of new cases of HIV infection. Restrictions on access to medications have been shown to result in nonadherence, higher rates of drug discontinuation, reductions in appropriate care, and adverse medical events, such as hospitalization and worsening clinical outcomes.

Individuals can have markedly different responses to different medications. Patients generally require a combination of no fewer than three different drugs from at least two different drug classes to effectively manage HIV/AIDS. Advances in medications have caused a dramatic and continuous decrease in AIDS deaths. Early treatment to suppress the HIV virus has the enormous public health benefit of significantly reducing the risk and, ultimately, the cost of disease transmission.

Allowing open access to medications provides the most cost-effective means to treating HIV/AIDS because it is likely to minimize other medical costs and reduce the number of new cases by slowing transmission. Open access allows for the best care of the patient, reduces patient-to-patient transmission, and provides the lowest overall cost to our public health system.

These therapeutic classes do best with highly individualized treatments and a smooth approach to obtaining care – no barriers. The African American population is healthier (obtains access to care and is compliant) with fewer barriers to care.

I hope you will take this into consideration.

Sincerely,

Corliss McKeever  
President and CEO  
African-American Health Coalition, Inc.