

OREGON MEDICAL ASSOCIATION



## MEMORANDUM

To: Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee  
Sen. Jeff Kruse, Co-Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee  
Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee

From: Bryan Boehringer, OMA Government Affairs  
Courtnei Dresser, OMA Government Affairs

Date: March 19, 2013

Re: Support of SB 777

---

The OMA supports the intent of SB 777, which modifies the meeting requirements for the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee. The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee is charged with advising the Oregon Health Authority on which prescription drugs should be included on any preferred drug list or formulary established by the Health Authority.

The OMA, on behalf of our membership, attends the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee meetings as well as those of its counterpart, the Health Evidence Review Commission (HERC). The HERC meetings are well publicized and agendas posted in a timely fashion whereas the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee meetings have been less transparent and agenda items have been added with less than 30 days' notice. Limiting the ability of the general public to access information related to the drug classes and drug use reviews up for discussion can be detrimental to what is intended to be a public process. Without appropriate notification, it is difficult to engage expert clinicians who are impacted by the drugs up for review. An OMA member and oncologist first brought this issue to the attention of the OMA when he was impacted by a decision of the committee to exclude reimbursement for drugs with marginal benefits in cancer treatment. The physician only became aware of the change in the drugs' status after it was eliminated from the preferred drug list, no longer available for his patient and no longer open to public testimony.

SB 777 is a first step towards increasing transparency in the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee agenda development. It does requires the committee to clarify the names of any drug to be discussed by the committee as well as consider any drug use reviews separately from recommendations for inclusion or exclusion on the preferred drug list. The OMA supports proposed amendments to further strengthen the agenda by dividing the Pharmacy and Therapeutic functions, considerations and actions from the Drug Use Review functions, considerations and actions.

Additionally, the OMA would like to see the bill amended to include language that would prohibit the committee from using any list or guidelines regarding coverage, payment or utilization of prescription

drugs developed or utilized by the Oregon Health Authority to discriminate against patients based on disease or condition, quality of life or expected length of life. As referenced above, the oncologist whose patient can no longer access his/her drug due to marginal benefit does feel that the decision to eliminate the drug from the preferred list was based on the use of the drug at the end of a patient's life. He was unable to weigh in on the discussion at the time it was being heard by the Committee and now must seek alternatives for his patients.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 77- we encourage you to support this bill and consider strengthening the bill with the suggested amendments.

The Oregon Medical Association is an organization of over 7,800 physicians, physician assistants, and medical students organized to serve and support physicians in their efforts to improve the health of Oregonians. Additional information can be found at [www.theOMA.org](http://www.theOMA.org).

11740 SW 68<sup>th</sup> Parkway, Suite 100  
Portland, Oregon 97223-9038  
phone 503.619.8000  
fax 503.619.0609  
[www.theOMA.org](http://www.theOMA.org)

SERVING AND SUPPORTING PHYSICIANS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF OREGONIANS