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Cascade AIDS Project



March 21, 2013

Health Care and Human Services Committee  
Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair  
Sen. Jeff Kruse, Vice Chair  
Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward  
Sen. Chip Shields  
Sen. Tim Knopp

MEASURE: SB 165  
EXHIBIT: 18  
S. HEALTHCARE & HUMAN SERVICES  
DATE: 3/21/13 PAGES: 1  
SUBMITTED BY: John Motter

Dear Madam Chair and Committee Members:

I am just one of more than 6,000 Oregonians with HIV. Advancements in medication and health care have played a vital role in changing the dialogue from "dying of AIDS" to "living with HIV." Senate Bill 165 will go a long way towards ensuring that this trend can continue.

Although my labs and doctor visits are numerous, it is my monthly co-pays for life-sustaining medicine that pose the largest cost. For example, in 2012, my out-of-pocket prescription costs were \$6,803 of which \$4,354 occurred in January and February. In the first two months of this year alone, I have spent \$2,829. These amounts, coupled with insurance costs and other co-pays eat up a large percentage of my income—more than many people pay for housing.

Senate Bill 165 is essential to patients and families across the state who are dealing with any sort of chronic disease. Capping the monthly costs means Oregonians will have less financial worry and be in a better position to address their illness. Patients will not have to decide what necessary medical care or prescription drugs they must sacrifice.

For example, I worry that another series of seizures will land me in the hospital for an extended stay. Over the past two years, I've paid \$2,200 in hospital room co-pays, not counting the expense of labs and doctors. I'm fortunate to have a family to rely on to help me through financial challenges such as these, but for many people, this is not an option. Those individuals could find themselves without housing or food simply because of a medical condition.

At Cascade AIDS Project, we see this scenario time and time again. Clients fall out of medical care and end up homeless or near homeless, with badly deteriorated health. As an agency, we support anything that will help them get the care they so desperately need.

Cascade AIDS Project is grateful that the Health Care and Human Services Committee is considering this important piece of legislation benefiting the patients and families that most need limits on out-of-pocket costs.

Sincerely,

John Motter

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