



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society
Oregon Chapter

Testimony before the Senate Health Care and Human Services Committee
regarding Senate Bill 460

February 28, 2013

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair Kruse, and members of the Committee:

The mission of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Oregon Chapter is to address the challenges of everyone affected by multiple sclerosis (MS). The Oregon Chapter represents more than 7,600 individuals with MS, and their families.

Multiple sclerosis is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system, which interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and the body. Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis. The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted, but advances in research and treatment are moving us closer to a world free of MS. There is no cure for MS.

The National MS Society is officially neutral on this bill but I want to let you know that the issue is of utmost importance to us.

Drugs to treat MS are extremely expensive. They can cost over \$5,000 a month. So we are extremely excited by the prospect of biosimilars to bring competition to the market and bring down costs.

However, we urge your caution before moving forward in developing state policy regarding biosimilars and automatic substitution. Patient safety must be the primary concern. The National MS Society supports the current legislative language following the FDA's determination of interchangeability. However, we believe additional time is needed by the FDA, patient groups, physician groups and state legislatures to fully understand biosimilars, the interchangeability standards, and the best recommendations for physician notification before developing state law around biosimilar substitution.

Existing biologic medications are complex drugs, and we know that not all of the current MS treatments work for every person living with MS. The same will likely be true of biosimilar products. Therefore, we urge your caution and allow us to get a better understanding of what biosimilars mean for people living with MS before moving forward.

Thank you for considering our perspective.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Choutka". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol Choutka
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