



February 11, 2015

TO: Representative Mitch Greenlick, Chair  
House Health Care Committee  
FR: Bob Joondeph, Executive Director  
RE: HB 2421

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is Oregon's federally-funded *Protection and Advocacy* office that provides legal-based advocacy services to Oregonians with disabilities.

DRO is concerned that HB 2421 will not provide adequate protection for individuals with psychiatric disabilities who want and need medications that are tailored to their individual circumstances.

While DRO praises efforts of the legislature and state to integrate mental health services into the broader health care delivery system and to control escalating drug costs, it is important to recognize that individuals with severe and persistent mental illness may respond very differently to medications. DRO regularly hears from individuals who have suffered through lengthy trials of medications in order to find one that works for them. We have also assisted individuals who have been taken off of medications that are effective and given a substitute due to a program or practitioner's concern about the cost of the medications. These substitutions have sometimes resulted in returned psychosis, self-harming behaviors and institutionalization.

DRO asks this committee to consider a middle path that recognizes the unique role of medications for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness while providing better oversight and regulation of excessive costs. We understand the NAMI Oregon has put forward proposals to reach a more balanced approach. DRO supports its efforts and urges this committee to give full consideration to their proposals.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.