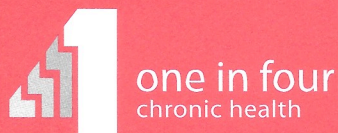


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February 11, 2015

House Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2421

Chair Greenlick, Vice Chairs Hayden & Nosse,
Members of the House Committee on Health Care:

On behalf of the organizations listed below and Oregonians living with mental illness, we are writing in opposition of HB2421; *Relating to mental health drugs; declaring an emergency.*

One in Four Chronic Health is a collaborative organization working to improve treatment access, affordability and the lives of people living with chronic health conditions. Mental illness impacts an estimated 25% of the adult population nationally and 68% of people with mental illness have *at least one* chronic medical conditionⁱ. In Oregon there are an estimated 20.9%, or 634,000 people, who are living with mental illness. We have twice the national average of homeless people living with mental illness, 6.2%ⁱⁱ, many of who are now receiving insurance coverage through Coordinated Care Organizations (CCO's).

HB 2421 would remove protections in the law guaranteeing access to mental health medication for CCO members. Removing direct state authority of medication dispensing and allowing CCO's to control formularies from "approved" lists threatens the adherence, health and well being of patients. Mental health medications work differently in each person, and it can be a difficult time consuming process to find the correct drug and dosage. Arbitrary switches for reasons of price are unnecessary and unwarranted; this is the reason you do not change horses mid-stream.

For people living with both mental health and comorbid chronic health conditions, access and adherence to mental health medications impacts more than just one issue. Simply, when patients stop taking mental health medications, they often also stop taking medications to manage other health conditions. This means that people are not taking medications to treat diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular, COPD, arthritis, hypertension and other conditions that 1.7 million Oregon residents are living withⁱⁱⁱ.

Only by working to remove access barriers, including restrictive formularies and step therapies, can we actively help provide patients with appropriate care. Allowing 16 CCO's to create their own policies and restrictions is not in the best interest of the patients.

This will lead to delays in treatment, confusion and undermines the patient protections already included in Oregon law; ORD 414.325 requires that the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) provide access to FDA-approved mental health medications and ORD 414.742 requires OHA to cover mental health medication on a fee-for-service basis rather than in the capitation rates of Coordinated Care Organizations^{iv}.

For these reasons we, the organizations listed below, are opposed to HB 2421.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill. If you should have any questions, please contact BJ Cavnor at 206/601-8453.

Sincerely,

Tyler TerMeer
Executive Director,
Cascade AIDS Project

Lorren Sandt
Executive Director,
Caring Ambassadors Program

Shelly Baily
Central Drugs,
Portland

Madonna McGuire Smith
Executive Director,
Hemophilia Foundation of Oregon

Debi McCabe
President,
Molly's Fund Fighting Lupus

BJ Cavnor
Executive Director,
One in Four Chronic Health

Reference

ⁱ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *Mental Disorders and Medical Comorbidity*, Policy Brief No. 21, February 2011 http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2011/rwjf69438

ⁱⁱ Mental Health America (MHA). *Parity or Disparity: The State of Mental Health in America 2015*. Available at: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/sites/default/files/Parity%20or%20Disparity%202015%20Report.pdf>. Accessed February 2015

ⁱⁱⁱ Suggested citation: Oregon Health Authority, Public Health Division, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention section. *Chronic diseases among adults, Oregon 2013*. <http://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/ChronicDisease/DataReports/Pages/AdultData.aspx>. Created October 2014. Accessed February 2015

^{iv} Oregon Legislative Council Committee. *Chapter 414 - Medical Assistance (2013)*. Available at: https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/lawsstatutes/2013ors414.html. Accessed February 2015