

March 4, 2015

Executive Director

Tyler TerMeer

Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair
Senate Committee On Health Care and Human Services
900 Court St. NE, S-413
Salem, Oregon 97301

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Dear Chair Monnes Anderson,

Cascade AIDS Project (CAP) is the oldest and largest community-based provider of HIV services, housing, education and advocacy in Oregon and Southwest Washington. A 501 (c)(3) patient group, we work to improve the quality of life for people with HIV and AIDS, often focusing on those least able to advocate for themselves. As a patient advocacy organization, CAP represents more than 2400 HIV-positive individuals, including your fellow Oregon residents. Many of these individuals take biologics, and stand to benefit greatly from the addition of biosimilars.

I am writing you today to express our support for SB 147 and our firm opposition to HB 2026.

At CAP, we help people put their lives back together, to secure housing, find essential medical care and deal with the countless issues that make the difference between giving up or getting up and going on. With HIV and AIDS, the huge emotional and financial burden to all affected by it can be staggering. Some people lose their jobs, their housing, their friends and family and any means of support, including advocating for their best interests. Using various channels of influence, we work to communicate and leverage new and improved medical treatments, such as biologics and biosimilars, to patients. As promising as these innovative drugs are, CAP believes that assuring their safety and transparency in the substitution process should be of paramount concern.

SB 147 takes positive steps toward updating Oregon law to cover biologics and biosimilars in a way that protects patients. Unlike traditional chemical drugs, biologics are unique, complex structures made from living cells that are not easily replicated. A small change or difference in the biosimilar or biologic manufacturing process has the potential to adversely impact the patient.

It is for this reason that we urge the committee members to vote in favor of Senate Bill 147 and against House Bill 2026 to ensure the continuation of safe, affordable access to biosimilar medication.

Sincerely,

Tyler TerMeer
Executive Director