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February 27, 2015

Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson
Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE, S-413
Salem, OR 97301

Representative Mitch Greenlick
Chair, House Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE, H-493
Salem, OR 97301

RE: **Senate Bill 147 – Support**
House Bill 2026 - Oppose

Madam Chair Anderson and Chairman Greenlick,

The Global Healthy Living Foundation (GHLF) is a 501 (c)(3) patient group that works to improve the quality of life for people with chronic disease, often focusing on those least able to advocate for themselves. As a patient advocacy organization, GHLF represents more than 75,000 chronically ill patients, including your fellow Oregon residents. Many of these individuals have rheumatoid arthritis, take biologics, and stand to benefit greatly from the addition of biosimilars.

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

At the GHLF, our focus is on improving the lives of patients with chronic illnesses through health care education and mobilization programs that stress the importance of diagnosis, early and innovative medical intervention, long-term lifestyle improvement and therapeutic compliance. 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, GHLF 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.

There are three provisions in SB 147 that GHLF believes are key to ensuring patients' safety and needs are met in the best way possible.

- First, the bill requires a pharmacist dispensing an interchangeable biosimilar to notify the prescribing physician within a reasonable time.

- Second, the bill clearly states that the patient for whom the biological product is prescribed must be informed of the substitution prior to dispensing
- Third, it requires pharmacies to retain record of the substitution for no less than 3 years
- Fourth it requires pharmacies to clearly display signage that informs a patient or their representative that an interchangeable biosimilar may be substituted for a biologic with their physician's permission.

Only the fourth bullet above from SB 147 is contained in HB 2026. The first, second, and third are not. Notification is crucial to preserving the doctor/patient relationship as well as the integrity of medical records, which are invaluable if there is an adverse event from using the drug.

Because bullets one, two, and three are absent from HB 2026, we are firmly opposed to HB 2026.

If it is determined by the doctor and patient that an interchangeable biosimilar can be substituted for a biologic, or is the preferred treatment, it is obvious to healthcare providers, patients and, we think, the majority of legislators, that proper record keeping be in place in order to track any adverse events that may occur.

As patient advocates, it is our duty to ensure that physicians are in charge of the drugs prescribed and that are both aware of what drugs they are taking. Patients and physicians are the primary individuals who report any adverse events that occur while on therapy. Adverse events can only be reported accurately if patients and physicians have received proper communication from a pharmacist about what medication has been dispensed. Patient safety is the top priority in the health care process and medical decisions must remain between a doctor and patient. We urge the passage of SB 147 because it introduces biosimilars in a way that ensures the safety of patients and preserves the physician-patient relationship.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this legislation and would be pleased to provide any further information that you may require.

Sincerely,



Seth Ginsberg
President, Global Health Living Foundation

CC:
Members, Senate Health Care Committee
Members, House Health Care Committee

