

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
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March 16, 2015

The House Committee on Health Care
c/o The Honorable Mitch Greenlick, Chair
State Capitol Building * 900 Court Street, N.E.
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Opposition to HB 2026 relating to biological products

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2026. I am here today on behalf of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). ACS CAN is the public policy and advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society.

We urge your opposition to HB 2026 because it allows pharmacists in Oregon to substitute interchangeable biosimilars without communicating that information with prescribing physician. We would be supportive if the bill was amended to require communication within 10 calendar days or five business days.

Biologics are manufactured in living organisms, and are therefore much more complex than manufacturing pharmaceutical generics. In addition, biosimilars are not exact replications of their reference biologic product and as such, a patient's response may be different to the substituted product. Given the complexity of cancer treatment -- and the fact that the majority of cancer patients are on multiple drugs -- even a slight variation has the potential to lead to complications that would not be readily understood by the physician or patient if there was no knowledge of a substitution.

Substituting a biosimilar without the prescribing physician's knowledge or a record that he or she can easily access is not sound medical policy and can potentially jeopardize patient safety. As a result, we ask you to oppose HB 2026 or amend as outlined above.

Respectfully,

Troy Rayburn, Director
Oregon Government Relations
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network