



Our Vision: No Life Limited by Pain

May 5, 2015

Senate Committee on Health Care
Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair
Oregon Senate
Salem, Oregon

RE: HB 2306

Dear Senator Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the American Academy of Pain Management to offer amendments to HB 2306, a bill that aims to reduce prescription drug abuse, misuse, and diversion through various means. Specifically, the bill would allow the Oregon Health Authority to restrict the pharmacy choices for filling and refilling prescriptions to a mail order pharmacy for a recipient of medical assistance who meets certain criteria suggesting that they are at risk for misusing prescription drugs. While we largely support the bill's efforts to reduce abuse, misuse, and diversion, we believe that this bill, as currently written, could greatly harm access to vital prescription medication for people with a legitimate medical need for pain treatment. For this reason, we oppose this bill as it is currently written. We would be amenable to supporting the bill should it be amended to address our concerns, outlined below.

If HB 2306 were to pass as written, the Oregon Health Authority would be allowed to restrict a recipient's pharmacy choices if a recipient "fills prescriptions from more than one prescriber for the same or comparable medications for the same time period." However, a patient could easily get the same or similar prescriptions for entirely legitimate reasons. For example, imagine that a patient with severe osteoarthritis is injured in a car accident—that patient may already be prescribed pain medication by one doctor, but another doctor in the emergency room may very well write them another similar prescription for the additional pain caused by their traumatic injuries. Another example would be a person with cancer being treated at an academic medical center—in this case, a medical resident may write a prescription for a new medication, only to discover that it causes intolerable nausea and vomiting, so the attending physician writes a second prescription for another medication. These patients should not have their pharmacy choice restricted so severely for such an entirely legitimate and necessary use of the healthcare system. We urge you to remove that provision from HB 2306.

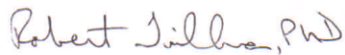
Further, we are concerned with what happens to patients once they are locked into a retail pharmacy. Although it is a recent phenomenon, we now hear that pharmacies regularly run out of medications, and patients must go in search of another pharmacy that has their vital medications in stock. If a patient were restricted to one retail pharmacy under the terms of this bill, what would happen to that

patient should the pharmacy be out of their medication? The language in this bill offers no alternative solution. Patients with severe pain who cannot get their prescription medication in a timely manner face excruciating pain, a significantly reduced quality of life, and dangerous withdrawal symptoms. In order for us to support HB 2306, there must be an additional provision that anticipates drug shortages and offers a plan to ensure that patients are able to receive their prescription medications when they need them.

We urge you to amend HB 2306 to ensure that patients are able to receive their legitimate prescription medication. I am happy to discuss this issue with you if necessary. Please feel free to contact me by email at btwillman@aapainmanage.org, or by telephone at 209-533-9750, ext. 110.

About the Academy: The American Academy of Pain Management is the premier organization for all clinicians who care for people with pain. It is the largest pain management organization in the nation and the only one that embraces, as part of its mission statement, an integrative model of care, which: is patient-centered; considers the whole person; encourages healthful lifestyle changes as part of the first line of treatment to restore wellness; is evidence-based; brings together all appropriate therapeutic approaches to reduce pain and achieve optimal health and healing; and, encourages a team approach.

Sincerely yours,



Robert Twillman, Ph.D., FAPM
Executive Director
American Academy of Pain Management