

From the desk of Rep. Boone



Adoption of the SB 93-B Conference Committee Report Will Increase Patient Safety and Access

The amendments and final version approved by the SB 93-B Conference Committee provide a unique opportunity to increase patient safety, access and convenience while at the same time creating fairness in the drug distribution system. The Oregon State Pharmacy Association and the Oregon Society of Health-System Pharmacists urge the adoption of SB93-B Conference Committee Report which will allow all pharmacies to provide a 90-day supply of prescription drugs for the management of chronic disease states as is currently allowed by payers for select networks or mail order.

Patients should not be required to have multiple pharmacies for the convenience and profit of the payers to manage therapy that will last a lifetime. This bill levels the playing field by providing all pharmacies the same reimbursement rates and eliminates current practices that force patients to use multiple pharmacies.

SB 93-B:

- Requires an initial 30-day dosage supply to ensure patient safety and effectiveness of treatment, prior to authorizing a 90-day supply.
- Allows a 90-day supply of prescription drugs (other than Schedule II controlled substances), when appropriate, which can reduce multiple trips to the pharmacy and provide patients the flexibility to leave home for vacations or emergency situations without the stress and burden of needing refills every 30-days. This is particularly significant with the advent of medication synchronization.
- Eliminates the current practice of allowing only mail order or preferred network pharmacies to provide 90-day supply. The current practice limits patient choice and, if the patient has a preferred local pharmacy or pharmacist, fragments therapy as health providers attempt to piece together a complete understanding of a patient's current drug therapy and adherence.

SB 93-B does not require payers to pay pharmacies at a different reimbursement rate than mail order pharmacies so should have no impact on costs. California, Washington and other states have approved similar statutes and have not experienced cost increases. SB 93-B does not interfere with the payers' ability to determine their formularies and benefit plans. This assures that the payers do not have to include expensive specialty drugs or other drugs not otherwise approved for 90-day supply treatments by the terms and conditions of their contracts. The Conference Committee adopted language to clarify that these provisions do not affect current contracts but only apply to contracts that are entered into or renewed on or after the effective date of the legislation.

If there is a natural disaster such as an earthquake, Oregonians could experience difficulty getting chronic condition medication and SB 93-B would provide more access to those patients who might lose their medication during emergencies.

Health providers and each patient's healthcare team are best prepared to make drug, disease, and patient specific therapeutic decisions regarding the appropriateness of 90-day supply. **Please support the SB 93-B Conference Committee Report to enhance safety and access for patients.**

Debra Boone