

NAMI Oregon Supports Open Access to Mental Health Medications

Because of strong patient protections in Oregon law, individuals living with mental illness currently have streamlined access to critical mental health medications. Under state management, Oregon is able to ensure that antidepressant and atypical antipsychotic medications are efficiently dispensed, which enhances an individual's ability to regularly take medications that promote recovery from serious mental illness.

NAMI Oregon opposes HB 2300, which would strip patient protections from state law. Individuals living with serious mental illness would be subjected to an “enforceable” preferred drug list, which will lead to delays in obtaining medications and to confusion among patients and providers.

→ NAMI Oregon opposes efforts to restrict access to critical mental health medications by placing them on “approved” and “non-approved” lists.

If access to antipsychotics is limited, patients will be denied their medication by the pharmacy if their medication isn't on the “approved” list. This will lead to unacceptable delays in access to prescriptions. Events have highlighted that delays in treatment can lead to catastrophic results.

→ Finding the most helpful medications should be based on clinical judgment and informed consumer choice — not an arbitrary “approved” list.

Mental health medications are an important tool for many individuals in managing their mental illness. Antidepressants and antipsychotics make a life-changing difference for thousands, allowing lives of success and inspiration, while newly approved drugs offer needed options for those who do not respond to current drugs or suffer serious side effects. Barriers to getting effective and well-tolerated medications can result in poor outcomes.

→ NAMI Oregon favors efforts to educate prescribers and consumers and to advance best prescribing practices, which will lead to improved quality of care.

NAMI Oregon has long urged the Oregon Health Authority to pursue evidence-based practices that actually improve prescribing practices so that individuals successfully address their mental health condition while reducing the incidents of harmful side effects.

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