



OREGON PSYCHIATRIC  
PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

Date: March 16, 2017

To: The Honorable Alissa Keny-Guyer, Chair  
The Honorable Andy Olson, Vice Chair  
The Honorable Tawna Sanchez, Vice-Chair  
Members of the House Human Services and Housing Committee

From: Daniel W. Dick MD, Co-Chair  
Craig Zarling, MD, Co-Chair  
Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association Legislative Committee

RE: Statement for the Record:HB 3262 Psychotropic Medications:

Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the Senate Health Care Committee:

The Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA), a district branch of the American Psychiatric Association, was established in 1966 and serves as the organization for medical doctors in Oregon specializing in treatment of mental disorders. Members of the OPPA fundamentally support the highest quality care for individuals with mental illness, including substance use disorders, and compassion for their families.

This bill would require DHS to adopt rules for the administration of psychotropic drugs for the elderly and disabled. OPPA supports a high bar for the administration of psychotropic medications, especially for vulnerable populations such as older adults, children, and those with disabilities. Psychotropic medications are designed to act directly on the brain and central nervous system. Common ones include antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications — some of which have the potential to cause dependency — mood-stabilizing medications and antipsychotic medications.

Designed to affect the brain, psychotropic medications also affect the rest of the body. To understand that effect, only a provider with medical training should prescribe psychotropic drugs. As physicians, psychiatrists can make a medical diagnosis, prescribe medication and monitor the biological treatment for safety.

**OPPA supports the forthcoming amendment requiring the review for a prescription of more than two doses be completed by “a primary care physician or a psychiatrist.”** The amendment is needed for practical reasons; if it isn’t added the concern is that some clinics may come to a grinding halt. Psychiatrists sometimes see many patients who refuse to see a primary care provider, or may refuse to see their current one on a regular basis. Plus, medication changes for these patients often need to occur rapidly to keep them out of the hospital. Additional reviews would cause unnecessary and potentially dangerous delays in care and treatment.

In summary, OPPA supports the amendment adding psychiatrists to review prescriptions of more than two doses, which would preserve the patient safety intent of the bill. We’d also like to thank Rep. Nathanson for working with us to address this issue.