



OREGON PSYCHIATRIC
PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

Date: May 8, 2017

To: The Honorable Sara Gelser, Chair
The Honorable Alan Olsen, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Human Services and Housing Committee

From: Jon Betlinski, M.D.
President-Elect Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association

RE: HB 3262A Psychotropic Medications

Chair Gelser and members of the 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.

OPPA supports HB 3262A. This bill would require DHS to adopt rules for the administration of psychotropic drugs for the elderly and disabled, including a review when multiple psychotropic medications are administered by someone other than the patient's primary care physician, psychiatrist or gerontologist.

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 — just like all other medications. 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.

Current law requires DHS to adopt rules for use of psychotropic medications for children placed in foster care. A GAO report showed that approximately 20 percent of youth in foster care were receiving psychotropic medications. As a result of this law went into effect in 2010, DHS, providers and CCOs must assure that a mental health assessment is occurring before any child in foster care receives more than one new psychotropic medication or any antipsychotic medication, except in cases of urgent medical need. An annual review of psychotropic medications is required by the DHS Medical Director and the Oregon Medicaid Drug Use Program. And all youth placed in foster care shall have a mental health assessment within 60 days. A review of

data about prescribing practices has shown a reduced use of antipsychotic medications for unapproved indications and improved safety and effectiveness of psychotropic medication use through the utilization of best practices.

Evaluation works. Let's extend this additional review to include the elderly and disabled.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'd be happy to answer any questions.