

TO: The Oregon House Committee on Health Care
FR: Nancy Plemons, Prescription Drug Patient, Vida, Oregon
DA: Feb. 5, 2018
RE: Testimony in support of House Bill 4005

Chair Greenlick, members of the Committee, thank you for having me here today.

My name is Nancy Plemons and I live in Vida, which is in Rep. Hayden's district. I am also a former ER nurse and educator living on a fixed income. I am also juggling multiple health conditions. I have a chronic heart condition, severe osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, lupus, and crippling allergies. As you can imagine, my days are challenging and to manage my health I have to take about 23 different medications. Having previous experience in the health care industry, seeing the price gouging by pharmaceutical companies is infuriating.

There are occasions where I have to prioritize medications and stop taking others, often times worsening my health. I have skipped refilling a prescription for one of my inhalers because, I cannot afford it.

When I recently sent a list of my prescriptions to a friend in Canada just to compare costs, I was shocked by the difference in price. She reported that 17 of my prescribed drugs, for which I pay \$236 out of pocket here, cost only \$19 combined in Canada. Fifteen of them were manufactured here in the United States, but I pay more. Why?

A prescribed topical anti-inflammatory that would cost me \$178 after insurance here is sold for just \$10 over-the-counter there.

And the inhaler I can't afford is \$125 here but only \$4 in Canada.

It's just not right.

My story is one that is too familiar for many and it's unacceptable. You shouldn't have to miss taking your medications because they are unaffordable. It's time to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable.

I pay 31 times more than I would in Canada for my inhaler. I pay 12 times more for all my medications combined. I think drug companies should have to report when they want to raise drug prices by double digits. I want to know what possible justification there is for raising my medications 10 percent or more again. I want to know how much is spent on advertising versus research. And I want to know why my medications cost more than they do in other countries.

That's why I support HB 4005, the Oregon Prescription Drug Price Transparency Act and I sincerely hope that you will, too, and pass this important legislation for people like me.

Thank you.