



## **Testimony in Support of HB 4005**

Diane Solomon  
February 5, 2018

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 4005. My name is Diane Solomon. I am a doctorally prepared nurse and member of ONA, representing registered nurses and nurse practitioners in health care settings across the state. I have been privileged to practice as a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and Certified Nurse-Midwife in rural, tribal, and urban Oregon for over 30 years. As a writer, I was also honored to author Senator Mark Hatfield's memoir with him.

I stand with ONA in supporting HB 4005, because it's time that drug and insurance companies be transparent about drug prices and their effect on premium costs that ultimately impede the delivery of successful, timely, and affordable patient care.

Prescription prices are one of the fastest growing cost drivers of health care today, more than doubling over the past several years. Oregon's patients too often cannot afford their medications and are forced to take reduced dosages, cut pills in half or make hard choice between medicine or rent or food. And Oregon companies—both small and large—cannot keep pace with the unsustainable rate of growth in prescription drug prices, being forced to choose plans for their employees with higher out-of-pocket maximums and far fewer benefits.

Unaffordable, unpredictable, skyrocketing prescription prices impact us all, including myself. My husband and I have four children, one on the autism spectrum. He, like most children with autism, struggles to sleep. Without medication, he is up at all hours, unable to learn or be socialized, miserably sleep deprived. Last year, we were forced to pay \$1200 for a simple, non-specialty, non-narcotic sleep medication that private insurance refused to pay.

In my own practice, I specialize in Women's Mental Health. When mothers suffer depression, anxiety, or other mental health disorders, known and catastrophic downstream effects ensue. Children of these mothers suffer psychiatric diagnoses, impaired cognitive, social, and academic functioning, and lifelong sequelae—often including entry into our criminal justice system. Maternal mental health disorders are easily treated with generic or brand name medications, yet, even those costs are simply too often out of reach for many. We simply cannot afford astronomical downstream health consequences tomorrow, while we stand by today.

HB 4005 takes an important step in driving down costs by requiring more transparency in drug price setting. Drug manufacturers will have to report to the state whenever they want to raise the price of a drug 10% or more and insurance companies will have to report on the top 25 most expensive drugs. And under HB 4005, the Department of Consumer and Business Services would hold annual public hearings about the high price of prescription drugs and develop recommendations to the legislature about tools for the state to help stem the rising prices. These regulations will help explain and address what I've seen in my practice: for example, why Nalaxone - which is essential in fighting the opioid epidemic - has increased 552% in the past three years alone.

Oregon patients and families cannot wait any longer for increased drug price transparency.

I urge your support for HB 4005. Thank you.

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