



February 8, 2018

The Honorable Mitch Greenlick, Chairman
House Committee on Health Care
Oregon House
900 Court St NE, H-472
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 4103 – Opposed

Dear Representative Greenlick and Distinguished Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Kate Jelline, a pharmacist with 20 years of pharmacy experience, 7 of them devoted to Specialty Pharmacy. I am currently the Manager of Pharmacy Operations and the Pharmacist in Charge at Ardon Health Specialty Pharmacy in Portland. I am offering the perspective of both a provider and as someone who has personal experience with specialty medications and care.

I oppose HB 4103 as it is currently written because it threatens both patient access to specialty medications and the safety of these patients by circumventing the specialized, quality clinical care and services currently provided by pharmacies accredited for specialty pharmacy.

I grew up working in our family-owned community pharmacy. My father and sister are pharmacists and I understand the challenges community pharmacists face in our increasingly complex prescription drug market. On most issues, I am aligned with my peers in the pharmacy community. This issue is different, because HB 4103 could harm the very patients it seeks to help.

Although specialty pharmacies primarily dispense and deliver specialty medications by courier services, the specialty pharmacy model of service and care differs dramatically from other models of patient care found within community and mail service pharmacies.

Only about 1% of all prescriptions dispensed in the U.S. are considered specialty medications. These are complex medications used to treat serious, chronic and life-threatening conditions such as cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, chronic inflammatory diseases, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C and others. The medications usually require careful cold chain storage to preserve integrity. They

often need to be injected and typically cause significant side effects that, without extensive patient education and careful monitoring, could derail therapy. And, these medications are expensive. The burden of patient co-pays can be a significant barrier to filling prescriptions. To even begin medication therapy, patients need increased access to support services. Once on therapy, patients need optimal ongoing clinical care to achieve and maintain treatment success.

The specialty pharmacy model of care is to provide robust, disease-state specific, clinical care and services that increase patient access to medications and care. Specialty pharmacies work closely with providers to enhance the level of clinical coordination and therapeutic efficiencies for patients, resulting in improved adherence and outcomes. Experienced pharmacists are available to counsel patients 24 hours a day. In addition to coordination with prescribers and insurance plans to speed access to medications and care, specialty pharmacies routinely connect patients with co-pay and financial assistance programs to reduce out-of-pocket expenses. Medications are typically delivered directly to patients, no matter where they live, so that the temperature of the medication is carefully controlled.

Nationally recognized, third party accreditation organizations provide an independent, external validation that a specialty pharmacy has met the rigorous industry quality and safety standards necessary to protect this vulnerable patient population. Accreditation standards also ensure patient safety by requiring that pharmacies communicate in a manner that is appropriate for the diversity of the patient population they serve. Accredited pharmacies must provide multiple language translation services and comply with numerous other communication standards designed to empower and protect patients.

Should HB 4103 move forward, I respectfully request that amendments be made to exempt specialty pharmacy from the definition of mail order pharmacies represented in the bill. Further, I request that this committee protect patients by recognizing the value of nationally recognized, independent accreditations for specialty pharmacy.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Jelline, PharmD
Ardon Health
Manger of Pharmacy Operations and Pharmacist in Charge