

**Date:** 01/30/2019

**To:** The Honorable Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair The Honorable Linthicum, Vice-Chair Members of the Senate Health Care Committee

**From:** Myra Haq, Portland, OR

**RE:** Position statement on SB 409, Prescription Drug Importation from Canada

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice Chair Linthicum and members of the Senate Health Care Committee:

Hello, and thank you for having me here today. My name is Myra Haq, and I am here to ask you to support SB 409, which will allow safe importation of lower-cost prescription medications from Canada for Oregonians like me.

I am thirty-one years old, and I have Crohn's disease, which is an inflammatory gastrointestinal condition. There are several medications that help alleviate my symptoms, and all of them have outrageous prices in the United States.

- Humira is the main prescription used to treat Crohn's. AbbVie, the maker of Humira, just raised the price an additional 9.7% this January. AbbVie makes \$12.6 billion in profit on this drug alone. My medical costs exceeded \$300,000 before insurance when I took Humira injections. Now, I'm unable to afford them.
- I now take four pills a day of Lialda. That's \$1,181 before insurance. I don't have the option of skipping a dose to save money because it would set me back even further in my treatment.
- I also do chemotherapy monthly to help keep my symptoms at bay. Chemo causes an intense level of exhaustion, which makes it impossible to hold down a full-time job. It also deletes your immune system so even if you do have a day job, you'll have to call out sick all the time due to the germ exposure. The type of

chemo I am on costs \$14,000 annually. It hasn't worked so far so I will eventually switch to a more expensive kind.

In addition to these expenses, I also have three different creams I use, because Crohn's causes skin (eczema) and lip problems (exfoliative cheilitis). I take Mupirocin, Triamcinolone and Hydrocortisone. That's an extra \$100 a month for all 3 and I often run out sooner. I can't skip the creams at all because I get eczema to the extent I can't bend my elbows. If the exfoliative cheilitis gets bad, I can't move my lips enough to eat.

Right now, I'm working as a nanny so I can get government assistance with my health care. I'm well-educated and intellectually capable of having a career other than nannying - but having this disease and having to spend so much money on treatment keeps me from meaningfully contributing to the economy through working or spending money.

I should not have to live like this at 31-years-old. These prescriptions cost PENNIES on the dollar in Canada. When pharmaceutical companies look at me, all they see is the money they can make. We MUST fix this system, and we can start by allowing prescription drug importation from Canada.

Thank you!