

Date: February 19, 2019

To: The Honorable Mitch Greenlick, Chair; The Honorable Cedric Hayden, Vice-Chair; The Honorable Robert Nosse, Vice-Chair Members of the House Health Care Committee

From: Phyllis Brown, Portland, OR

RE: Please support HB 2689 and HB 2658

Chair Greenlick, Vice-Chairs Nosse and Hayden, and members of the House Health Care Committee,

Good afternoon and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Phyllis Brown. I am a retired Obstetrician Gynecologist and live in Northeast Portland. I believe supporting House Bill 2689, which would allow the importation of safe pharmaceuticals from Canada, and House Bill 2658, which would require pharmaceutical companies to give a 60-day notice of price increases, would be a step in the right direction to ensure lower cost and better availability of generic medications.

Let me give you an example of a patient I could have seen in a hospital emergency department during my tenure as a practicing physician. Let's call her Brittany: She is a 17 year-old high school student who was seen in an out-patient clinic for a presumed pelvic infection. She was appropriately treated with an intramuscular injection of antibiotics and then sent home with a prescription for fourteen days of oral doxycycline, 100 mg twice daily. However, Brittany did not fill the prescription because the cost to her would have been \$75.00, which she did not have. Within the following week, she developed malaise, fever and worsening abdominal pain and went to the emergency department, where she was diagnosed with a pelvic abscess requiring hospitalization, IV antibiotics and eventual surgical drainage.

Doxycycline is an antibiotic that has been approved by the FDA for over fifty years, which is on World Health Organization's List of Essential Medicines, and is available as a generic. However, the price has soared from time to time and it has not always been readily available. For example, the price skyrocketed 6,000 % from \$0.05 per pill in 2012 to \$3.65 in 2013, and supply was limited.

Unfortunately, these radical swings in the price and availability of generic medications is not limited to doxycycline. Penicillin G (PCN G), which is considered the only antibiotic available to treat syphilis in pregnancy, has also experienced shortages due to a lack of manufacturers and suppliers in the United States. Studies have confirmed that when there are two or fewer sources for generic medication there is market volatility and shortages.

I believe HB 2689 and HB 2658 would be a starting point to help rectify the broken market system we currently have in the United States for supply of generic pharmaceuticals. HB 2689 would allow importation of drugs from Canada and allow for improved supply and competition in the pharmaceutical marketplace. HB 2658, which would require a 60-day notification for

significant price increases, would allow time to change prescribing patterns or allow health systems to renegotiate pharmaceutical pricing.

Let me finish my testimony with the rest of Brittany's story. After a ten day hospitalization, she was able to return to her studies and a few weeks later to her usual activities. Her life, however, will be forever changed. She will face the risk of infertility, pregnancy complications and ongoing debilitating pain. Let's help patients like Brittany by making medication less expensive and more available.

In conclusion, I would ask you to help fix the broken market system for pharmaceuticals in our country by supporting HB 2689 and HB 2658.

Thank you for your time and consideration.