



Support HB 2755

Increased Access to Generics & Biologics

Background

Patients in Oregon and the U.S. pay more for prescription drugs than anywhere in the world, whether it's an inhaler or heart medicine. In 2018 the Oregon Legislature passed HB 4005 which requires more transparency of those prescription drug costs when the manufacturer increases the price over a 10% threshold per year. The bill passed with bipartisan, supermajority support.

However, when it comes to bringing the cost of prescription drugs down, transparency is only the first step. If we're going to address the outrageous pricing of pharmaceutical drugs we need to have a multi-pronged approach to make health plans more affordable by positioning pharmacists to automatically substitute interchangeable biological products with prescribed biological products, and to automatically prescribe generic drugs which are less expensive than name brand prescriptions.

The Problem

Last year drug companies increased prescription drug prices at 10 times the rate of inflation. That is unnecessary, and the market is broken. We need to take action now to protect seniors and other Oregonians who depend on prescription drugs. Name brand drugs often represent the highest instances of inflated costs. Pharmacists have the option of substituting a name brand biological product with an interchangeable product of lesser cost, or prescribing a less expensive generic drug. In many instances, consumers are not aware that there is an alternative and unknowingly pay hundreds of dollars more.

The Solution

HB 2755 combines two bills: HB 2753 (generics) and HB 2754 (biologics).

- HB 2753 requires pharmacists to substitute name brand drugs for the lowest costs generic alternative unless there is no alternative or interchangeable drug available.
- HB 2754 requires pharmacists to substitute name brand biological products for the lowest cost alternative unless there is no alternative or interchangeable biological product available.

These changes would disincentivize over-inflation name brands and position consumers to pay the lowest possible cost available to them. Mandatory substitution of an interchangeable biological product helps manage consumer costs by reimbursing the cost of a given prescribed biological product up to the price of the lowest-price alternative. The State Board of Pharmacy would oversee implementation and compliance with the law.

Drug companies make double the profits of pharmacists, distributors, insurance companies, and pharmacy benefit managers combined.

Contact:

Courtney Helstein, courtneyh@strategies360.com, (503) 915-2948
Dave Hunt, daveh@strategies360.com, (503) 810-8387



Oregonians are calling on lawmakers to take action on lower drug prices.



"I am a former ER nurse and educator living on a fixed income. I have a chronic heart condition, severe osteoarthritis and crippling allergies. 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 at \$125, I cannot afford it.

When I recently sent a list of my prescriptions to a friend in Canada 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.

The topical cream I use for my osteoarthritis pain is \$168 per tube here, and only \$4 in Canada. It's just not right.

My story is one that is too familiar for many and it's unacceptable. It's time for pharmaceutical companies to be held 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'm calling on my lawmakers to take action – Oregonians need lower prescription costs now."

— Nancy Plemons, Vida, OR

Over 20 trusted organizations across Oregon have come together to fight back against pharmaceutical industry price-gouging.

See the full list & learn more: AffordableRxNow.org