

Date: 2/19/19

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

From: Myra Haq, Portland, OR

RE: Please support bills to lower prescription drug prices: HB 2753, HB 2754, HB 2755 & HB 2961

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

My name is Myra Haq, and I live in NE Portland. I have testified to you previously in support of other bills to lower prescription drug prices, including HB 2689 and HB 2658. Sadly, I cannot be there in person today to ask for your support for HB 2753, HB 2754, HB 2755 and HB 2961.

The first three bills will increase access to lower-cost generics and biologics, and HB 2961 will require pharmaceutical companies to list the wholesale price of prescriptions in any and all advertisements in Oregon, which would help people make more informed choices about their medications, and disincentivize extreme price increases above wholesale costs.

Let me tell you specifically how these bills would help 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.

There could be cheaper generic or biologic options to my medications and I would never know. House Bills 2753, 2754, and 2755 would require my pharmacist to let me know. HB 2961 would help me understand how much my medications truly cost, and hopefully hold the pharmaceutical companies like AbbVie accountable for their outrageous price-gouging on life-saving medications.

Thank you for considering these bills, which would help not only me, but so many other people.

Myra Haq
NE Portland