

February 25th, 2019

Chair Salinas and Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

My name is Erin Faulhaber, I live with a chronic auto-immune condition known as psoriatic arthritis (PsA). I am an advocate of the National Psoriasis Foundation who represent 8.3 million persons with psoriasis; 30 percent of whom will develop psoriatic arthritis, like me. I encourage you to support HB 2799 and ensure patients have protections and transparency around prescription drug costs.

I take several prescriptions to control my chronic pain and joint damage. One of my current medications is an injection taken every 4 to 12 weeks. When I began taking the prescription I had a \$20-\$40-\$60 tiered co-pay for my pharmacy benefits on my insurance plan. The injection was in the \$40 tier. This was not my only prescription, so my monthly out of pocket for medicine was usually \$120 on the months that I took my injection, and \$80 on the months that I did not.

After a few months I went to the pharmacy to pick up my prescription refills and was hit with a \$200 co-pay total. When I asked why it was so high I was told that my cost was now \$120 for my injection. I was floored by this, as my highest co-pay tier was \$60 and this was double even that! The pharmacy tech did a little digging for me to find out why my bill was so much higher than it should be. My insurance carrier decided to reclassify my injection and charge me 3 co-pays (\$40 each) for one syringe. I was required to pay the same amount for taking the prescription every 12 weeks as I would be charged if I was taking it every 4 weeks, but receiving 1/3 less medication. That's right, I am being charged 2 out of every 3 months for NOT taking a prescription in those months.

I am on disability and have to budget my expenses tightly. Having to put off getting my medicine because this unexpected change was unaffordable, significantly impacted my health. Not being able to take my medication on time causes flare ups in my condition that affect every aspect of my life and my family. In addition to the higher prescription cost, I had to have additional appointments with my doctor due to effects on my health. Each of those additional appointments was another \$40 to budget for.

Patients need stability and transparency when selecting their plans. I selected this plan initially because the coverage and cost of my treatment plan. This bill would expand choice and give patients the option to have a plan that is upfront and not confusing with deductibles and coinsurance. For many of us we budget down to the last cent and unpredictability could mean life or death. I encourage you to support HB 2799.

Sincerely,

Erin Faulhaber
Portland Resident