

February 26, 2010

To: House Committee on Health Care  
Re: Support for House Bill 2799

Dear Chairwoman Salinas and Members of the Committee,

Health Care for All Oregon-Action (HCAO-Action), an organization working as part of a movement working towards equitable, affordable, universal healthcare with over 120 supporting organizations and 33,000 Oregonians in its database, is very concerned about the egregious price increases on pharmaceuticals in recent years. As a state, and a nation, we must take action to make medication more affordable.

HCAO-Action appreciates this opportunity to express support for HB 2799, which seeks to create consumer protections that ensure that patients living with chronic and life-threatening conditions have affordable, predictable out-of-pocket costs for the treatments they need. HB 2799 applies the following requirements to state-regulated individual and group insurance plans:

- Each carrier must ensure that a pre-deductible copay is applied to the entire prescription drug benefit in at least 25% of individual and group plans offered in each service area and on each metal tier
- This copay-only benefit design must be reasonably graduated and proportionately related across all tiers of the plan's formulary
- If a carrier offers only one plan in a given metal level within a service area, that one plan must meet the requirements described above
- Requires insurers to annually report changes made during the plan year to their formulary that would adversely impact consumers. These include moving a drug to a higher cost-sharing tier, removing a drug from the formulary or applying additional utilization management controls to a drug during the plan year.

In our work around the state we hear heartbreaking stories about Oregonians who literally cannot afford to purchase the life-saving medication needed for themselves or their families. This must stop!

Again, HCAO-Action urges your support of HB 2799 to create important consumer protections which will ensure that all Oregonians are able to have affordable, predictable out-of-pocket costs for the treatments they need.

Thanks for your time and consideration in this matter.



Lee Mercer, President, HCAO-Action  
Charlie Swanson, HCAO-Action legislative committee chair