



DA: February 26, 2019  
TO: House Committee on Health Care  
FR: Cascade AIDS Project, Prism Health  
RE: In support of HB 2799

Chair Salinas, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Nosse, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Peter Parisot and I am the Deputy Executive Director of the Cascade AIDS Project, Oregon's largest and oldest AIDS Service organization, and Prism Health. Collectively our mission is to support and empower all people with or affected by HIV, reduce stigma, and provide the LGBTQ+ community with compassionate healthcare.

We have been providing services to individuals living with or affected by HIV for 35 years. Prism Health is our LGBTQ+ focused primary care clinic that provides the community with the safe and affirming health care that they need and deserve.

As such, our scope of work includes a robust prevention and education department that administered nearly 3500 free HIV tests in our community and helps our clients access vital prescription drugs like PrEP. Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a medication that can prevent HIV infection when taken daily. Studies show that PrEP is up to 99% effective when taken every single day.

Currently, Truvada is the only drug approved by the FDA for use as PrEP. A year's supply costs over \$20,000, or about \$1,700 a month. This cost places a significant burden on our clients as they struggle to adhere to their medication while dealing with high deductibles, premiums, and rising coinsurance costs. Additionally, fluctuating formularies make it even more difficult for our clients to budget for their prescription drugs costs throughout the year.

PrEP is not the only high-priced drug our stakeholders need to access. For individuals living with HIV, the cost of their monthly drug regime can be prohibitive. Exorbitant co-insurance requirements often require individuals to make hard choices between paying for their prescriptions or other life necessities such as rent or groceries. One client, Kyle, aged 32, who is self-employed and purchased insurance off the exchange stated, "I have to pay \$4,800 a year out of pocket for my HIV meds ... it is harder and harder every year to make ends meet and pay for my medications."

This is why CAP has joined several other organizations in Oregon in support of House Bill 2799. HB 2799 would require carriers to offer, in at least 25% of their benefit plans, flat dollar copayments for prescription drug coverage. In addition, it requires carriers to report annually to the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) information about changes to the formulary, cost sharing, and utilization controls for prescription drugs.

HB 2799 would not only provide Oregonians who rely on expensive prescription drugs more certainty on the out-of-pocket costs they will be responsible for each month, the bill continues the efforts of the legislature to increase prescription drug price transparency for consumers, similarly to HB 4005 passed in 2018.

Thank you for your time and consideration, we urge your support for HB 2799.

With Gratitude,

Peter Parisot