



March 21, 2019

Cambia Health Plans Support HB 3273

Dear Chair Salinas and Members of the House Committee on Health Care:

On behalf of our locally based health plans, Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon and Bridgespan Health, we write to the Committee in full support of HB 3273.

There is strong evidence that misuse and abuse of prescription drugs are significant contributors to opioid addiction. The majority of misused prescription drugs are obtained from family or friends, and often from a home medicine cabinet. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has identified the proper disposal of unneeded or expired prescription drugs as a key strategy to prevent drug abuse and addiction. Unfortunately, most Americans are not aware of, or cannot easily find prescription drug disposal programs in their communities.

According to Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, more than 60% of teens and young adults who misuse prescription medication say they got the drugs from family, friends, or acquaintances. Limiting access to these drugs is a critical step in mitigating the risks of prescription medications. Our communities need resources, such as take-back programs, to safely dispose of unwanted medications and protect public health. We stand with law enforcement, public health, and environmental professionals in support of take-back programs as a safe and responsible way to dispose of unwanted and expired medicines. We are committed to ensuring consumer safety, and support efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of our members and community.

In addition to showing our support for this important legislation, Cambia is committed to working with our community partners to provide essential drug disposal resources to our consumers. In 2018, Regence teamed with local Walgreens stores to provide safe medication disposal kiosks. Regence sponsored 38 kiosks throughout Oregon, Washington, Utah, and Idaho.

We encourage the Oregon legislature to continue this important work of providing a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs with passage of HB 3273.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Pegus, MD".

Cheryl Pegus, M.D., MPH
Chief Medical Officer