



Testimony in Support of HB 2658 A

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Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of increased transparency through a 60-day notice of price increases in HB 2658A.

The Oregon Nurses Association is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association and is proud to represent over 15,000 registered nurses who work in almost every health care setting -- from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers and in community-based public health. In every setting, nurses too often see their patients -- and their own families -- struggle with the cost of prescription drugs.

As you know, prescription prices are one of the fastest growing cost drivers of health care today, more than doubling over the past several years. Too often, Oregon's patients cannot afford their medications and are forced to take reduced dosages, cut pills in half or make hard choices between medicine, rent, or food for themselves and their families. And Oregon companies—both small and large—cannot keep pace with unsustainable growth in prescription drug prices, being forced to choose plans for their employees with higher out-of-pocket maximums and far fewer benefits.

HB 2658 takes an important step in driving down costs by requiring more transparency in drug price setting. The bill requires drug manufacturers to provide a 60-notice to the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services for significant price increases in prescription and brand name drugs. These regulations will help stabilize the market and explain and address price increases: for example, why Nalaxone - which is essential in fighting the opioid epidemic - has increased 552% in the past several years alone. When similar legislation passed in California, planned pharmaceutical price spikes were called off or reduced. The bill will also give Oregonians time to work with their provider to find an alternative drug and gives insurance companies time to negotiate a lower price, keeping health care costs lower for everyone.

Today, Oregon's patients are paying more at the pharmacy and consumers experience higher insurance premiums, while employers have to cut benefits and state budgets are burdened by high drug prices. It's critical that Oregon use every tool available to ensure access to prescription drugs that Oregonians need. Ultimately, prescription drug costs start with the prices set by the drug companies and this bill works to help address that. That's why the Oregon Nurses Association urges your support of meaningful prescription drug reform through HB 2658A today.