



March 3, 2021

TO: Senate Committee on Health Care  
FR: Charlie Fisher, Director, Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG)  
RE: In Support of SB 763 and SB 764,

OSPIRG is a statewide, citizen-based, public interest organization representing thousands of Oregonians.

**OSPIRG supports SB 763 and 764.**

One of the biggest takeaways from the Prescription Drug Price Transparency Act and the resulting reports these last two years is that prescriptions still cost too much. That expense is more apparent when you compare the costs of brand name versus generic prescriptions. The top five most expensive brand name prescriptions in 2020 were between \$23,000-43,000. The top five most expensive generic prescriptions were between \$1,200 and \$2,800.<sup>1</sup> The differences are extraordinary, and yet in Oregon brand name companies are permitted to pay generic manufacturers to delay entering the market with their alternate, and often less expensive, prescriptions.

As a consumer advocacy organization, OSPIRG hears from citizens across the state about the high cost of their prescriptions. One young man shared that he is diabetic and works both a full-time job and a weekend job, but is still reliant on his family to help pay for his insulin because of the cost. He said, "It's terrifying to me knowing I work sometimes 56 hours a week, and still can't afford insulin for myself." Another woman with MS told us that her monthly bill for prescriptions alone is over \$8,000. Her insurance covers some of it, but her husband is retiring and soon and they won't have the same coverage. That \$8,000 bill is a big concern for them.

SB 764 does nothing more than prevent brand name manufacturers from establishing a monopoly on life-saving medications by paying other companies to stay out of the market.

Something else noted by the 2020 report was that the most common way manufacturers reported marketing their drugs to health care professionals was through pharmaceutical sales representatives.<sup>2</sup> These sales meetings are largely unregulated, closed-door conversations aimed at convincing a provider to purchase their products *and* prescribe them.

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<sup>1</sup> Page 38 and 39 of the [Oregon Drug Price Transparency Program Annual Report of 2020](#).

<sup>2</sup> Page. 29 of the [Oregon Drug Price Transparency Program Annual Report of 2020](#).

Prescription drugs can be life-changing for those that need them. Put another way, prescription drugs directly affect the health and wellbeing of the patients who are prescribed them. But the job of a pharmaceutical representative is to sell their product, ostensibly for the health of patients, but more directly for their companies' profits. SB 763 would require registration to market these products, education on ethical standards, and disclosure of interactions with providers. This is nothing more than we would ask of other professionals to ensure transparency and protect consumers.

In the last few years, Oregon has taken steps to increase transparency and lower prescription drug prices, but there is more to be done. I urge you to support SB 763 and 764 to continue that work.