



Senate Committee on Health Care
Testimony in Support of SB 844
Andrea Meyer, Director of Government Relations
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AARP Oregon is pleased to support SB 844 that creates an Oregon Prescription Drug Affordability Board. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. **With 503,000 members in Oregon, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families, with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment.**

Prescription drugs prices hit older Americans particularly hard. Older Oregonians rely on prescription drugs but many are facing the very real possibility of having to choose between their medication and other basic needs such as food or housing. On average, Medicare Part D enrollees take more than four prescriptions per month, often for chronic conditions that would require treatment for the rest of their lives. At the same time, Medicare beneficiaries have a median annual income of just over \$26,000. This population simply does not have the resources to absorb rapidly escalating prescription drug prices.

The prices of existing prescription drugs are growing rapidly. At the beginning of 2021, more than 100 pharmaceutical companies raised prices on over 600 drugs.¹ AARP Public Policy Institute's 2019 Rx Price Watch report found that the retail prices for widely used brand name prescription drugs increased at more than double the rate of inflation in 2018.² This is not a one-time problem.

Just one example: In 2017, 465,135 Oregonians have been diagnosed with cancer. Revlimid is a cancer drug that may help many of these individuals. Between 2012 to 2017, the price of Revlimid went from \$147, 413 to \$247,496 per year.³ In 2021, that price has gone to about \$280,000 per year.⁴

Oregon would be the fourth state to pass such a law, joining Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts and New York. SB 844 would ensure that prescription drug launch prices and subsequent pricing decisions are reasonable, justified and support improved consumer access and affordability.

For all these reasons, AARP urges you to pass SB 844.

¹ <https://www.axios.com/drug-price-increases-new-year-2021-cf1fce6d-3c82-456f-9a6c-6b5144b4f061.html>

² <https://www.aarp.org/ppi/info-2019/trends-in-retail-prices-of-drugs.html>

³ <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/politics/advocacy/2019/09/rx-state-infographic-three-issues-oregon.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.drugs.com/price-guide/revlimid>