



March 22, 2021

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

We at Basic Rights Oregon are writing to respectfully request your support for House Bill 2958, which will provide greater access to HIV preventative medications including PrEP and PEP.

As the leading LGBTQ advocacy organization in Oregon, we consistently hear from people in our community that access to health care and medication is one of the most pressing concerns they face.

And the numbers are clear: our community is in need. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 1.1 million persons in the United States are currently living with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), with 707,100 gay and bisexual men living with HIV<sup>1</sup>. In Oregon, according to the Oregon Health Authority, there are 210 to 230 new HIV infections every year, and gay and bisexual men comprise the largest proportion of HIV cases<sup>2</sup>. In the face of these growing numbers, there are life-saving antiretroviral drugs to treat individuals living with HIV, in addition to drugs that can prevent HIV infection altogether.

Yet there is still a major barrier to access due to the expense and accessibility of these drugs, and the people who need these life-saving medications cannot wait any longer.

HB 2958 takes a major step towards addressing these concerns by clarifying that licensed pharmacists in Oregon have the legal authority to conduct an HIV test, order lab tests, and interpret lab-test results, all of which they must be able to do to safely prescribe PrEP.

It also will ensure that PrEP and PEP are covered even at an out-of-network pharmacy, and that insurance providers reimburse pharmacists for fees associated with providing patient consultations for prescribing medications like PrEP and PEP. This financial reimbursement is important, since without it, it wouldn't be feasible for pharmacists to prescribe PrEP and PEP.

Our community has faced enormous barriers in the fight against HIV. But by eliminating barriers to care, ending HIV in Oregon is possible. House Bill 2958 can help get us there, and we ask for your full support for this bill.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> CDC, Estimated HIV incidence and prevalence in the United States 2010–2016

<sup>2</sup> Oregon Health Authority, HIV Data and Analysis:  
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DiseasesConditions/CommunicableDisease/DiseaseSurveillanceData/HIVData/Pages/index.aspx>