



February 23, 2021

Senator Deb Patterson
Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court St., NE S-215
Salem, OR 97301

RE: In support of SB 560

Dear Chair Patterson and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

There is a war going on within the healthcare committee. The fight is between insurance companies and drug manufacturers. It's a decades old battle over profits—and now insurance companies are resorting to a tactic to win that puts patients directly in the line of fire. This, in our view, is beyond the pale, and SB 560 is intended to stop it.

The tactic is the copay accumulator program. Across the country, insurance companies are trapping patients with these programs, which effectively eliminate charitable and copay assistance programs for medications and force regular people to pay thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars more per year for treatments if they want to continue to stay well. These programs are the ultimate throw-down from insurance companies to force a public debate over the cost of drugs by harming the most vulnerable stakeholders in the system—patients.

As we heard from members of the insurance community during the Feb. 22 public hearing on SB 560, insurance companies link this bill banning copay accumulators to the entire dysfunction of the health care system. They are opposed to this bill because they believe that it does not address “the heart of the issue,” which in their minds is the high cost of drugs.

Indeed, these insurance companies are correct: SB 560 is not intended to solve all the ills of the American health care system, including the problem of the high cost of drugs. This bill is intended to solve the very narrow problem that patients should not be the ones held hostage in the battle between insurance companies and drug manufacturers.

The passage of SB 560 means that no matter what is going on with that larger fight, the Oregon legislature refuses to let patients be a target; that our state refuses to let the finances and health of Oregonians be the collateral damage in the debate over who deserves to profit more from our healthcare system. We stand with Oregon patients and we ask that you do, too.

Please vote yes on SB 560.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Erin Morgan', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Erin Foote Morgan, Executive Director
Chronic Disease Coalition