
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

February 14, 2023

Chair Nosse and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon (PPAO) is the statewide political voice for Planned Parenthood's two Oregon affiliates and for reproductive health care. PPAO defends the Planned Parenthood mission by advocating for public policy that will enhance and protect reproductive health care. As a leading advocate for the full range of sexual and reproductive healthcare, PPAO believes that all people deserve to have accessible, affordable, and culturally competent care. We respectfully urge the committee to support HB 2574 to expand access to PEP for patients in our state.

HIV post-exposure prophylaxis is a safe combination of medications that is highly effective at preventing HIV infection. Community members and patients who face the greatest risk of exposure – BIPOC, LGBTQ+ individuals, and survivors of sexual assault also often face incredible geographic, economic, and other systemic barriers to accessing the care they need. For too long, HIV has disproportionately impacted gay and bi-sexual men, transgender women, and people of color. In the past six months, Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette has assisted 146 patients in accessing PEP and PrEP treatment across their 7 health centers, 40% of whom identified as nonwhite.

HB 2574 would require emergency rooms make PEP treatment available and would prohibit cost-sharing from insurers. With a 72-hour timeline to administer PEP, increasing access to this treatment in rural communities where patients may have travel long distances to find a health center or pharmacy where this treatment is available is critical. This bill will help make sure lifesaving medications are available for those who want and need it.

At PPAO, we know how an unexpected medical emergency can derail an individual's life, cause undue stress, and create a potential ripple of economic impact on a patient. Every case of HIV prevented means another person, another family, another community not struggling with a lifetime of burdensome medical costs, complicated drug regimens, and social injustice. Making effective, preventative treatments like PEP available at no cost-sharing to patients is an important step in creating accessible health care for all Oregonians. We are pleased to support the broad coalition of medical and public health organizations who are working to pass HB 2574 and urge the committee to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Cassie Purdy
Political Director
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon