



February 20, 2023

To: Senate Health Care Committee
From: Emerson Hamlin, Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association; Oregon Coalition for Affordable Prescriptions Board Member
Re: Support for SB 404

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and members of the committee,

My name is Emerson Hamlin, and as part of my role as a political organizer for the Oregon Nurses Association, I am a board member of the Oregon Coalition for Affordable Prescriptions (OCAP). OCAP is a diverse coalition of organizations and advocates that work to rein in drug prices and hold the pharmaceutical industry accountable.

Both ONA and OCAP support SB 404, and the -1 amendment, in its goals of increasing transparency and lowering costs for consumers. OCAP helped pass Senate Bill 844 in 2021, which established the Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB). OCAP is grateful for the PDAB board's work, including their report and recommendations to the legislature. However, as their report suggests, there is more to be done.

SB 404 -1 captures the five recommendations made within the Board's initial report and work towards the goals of increased transparency and lower costs. The first four pieces of this bill would allow consumers, advocates, and policy makers to understand how the drug industry is working. This includes supply chain transparency, which allows greater insight into drug pricing. It also includes patient assistance reporting and advocacy organization reporting, for a better understanding of overall pharmaceutical spending. The last transparency element is the requirement that *all* state regulated health insurer carriers provide data to the PDAB. Each of these steps towards transparency allows us a more complete picture of where costs are coming from and provides insight into other policies that can lower the cost of prescription drugs.

The fifth recommendation this bill includes is upper payment limits, which allows PDAB to set limits for governmental purchasers. OCAP is supportive of efforts that lower prescription drug costs for patients and consumers. We believe that a UPL is an important tool in this work.

ONA is supportive of this bill because our nurses constantly see the impacts of unaffordable, inaccessible prescription drugs on their patients. Some patients ration medications, others go into debt to afford their meds, and still others go without, putting their health at risk in order to keep a roof over their heads or food on the table. Medication costs are not only weakening families and our communities, but impact providers as well. Seeing individuals who cannot get the medications they need creates moral injury, because our nurses fundamentally believe that everyone deserves to receive timely, appropriate health care. One nurse shared with me that making sure her patients got the care they needed, including medication, was emotionally exhausting, and the uncertainty and worry that they may not get care kept her up at night. Our



providers deserve better. SB 404, and the -1 amendment, is part of the solution, by making Oregon a more transparent state, and moving us towards being a state where everyone can afford the medications they need. We urge your support. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Emerson Hamlin