

Submitter: Sarah Rohrs

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: SB607

May 10, 2023

Rep Rob Nosse, chair and other Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care members

My name is Sarah Rohrs. I live in Salem and I'm writing to urge you to pass SB 607 which would require the state to cast a critical eye on the Oregon Pain Management Commission.

I strongly support this bill as a vital step in returning the commission's focus back to advocacy, treatment and education for Oregonians in acute and chronic pain.

Over time, the commission has stepped far away from its original mission and is now overly-focused on addiction and tapering chronic pain patients off their medications. Rather than help those in chronic pain commission members are advancing an anti-opioid agenda that leaves science, and good medicine behind.

The commission's aim to restrict physicians' use of opioids in treatment of acute and chronic pain has resulted in incalculable and unnecessary suffering as countless Oregonians have undergone forced tapering of their pain medication. This cruel and unnecessary act leaves many in daily misery, bed-bound and contemplating suicide.

I use the word unnecessary as forced tapering of opioids used by chronic pain patients has done nothing to stop overdoses from illegal fentanyl. In fact, as pain medication prescriptions have decreased over the last 7 years, overdoses have shot up. Denying pain medication to chronic pain medication is wrong and harmful.

Addicts are an extremely small percentage of those who use opioid medications. The commission needs to represent all people in chronic or acute pain and not dismiss their legitimate concerns.

I am not in chronic pain myself but I am intimately familiar with this debilitating condition. My husband has lived with chronic pain for ten years. He underwent a forced taper of his opioid-based medication that left him much worse off. As the commission's anti-opioid stance became more and more pronounced over the last 7 years, we've attended several commission meetings in which chronic pain patients were ignored and rudely dismissed. That is not right.

Please listen to the Oregon pain community's demands for a strong voice on the commission. And as you deliberate, also please consider those Oregonians in chronic pain who are unable, due to their untreated pain and physical limitations, to attend your hearing or sit at a computer to write out their testimony. You have the power to assure their voices are heard on the Oregon Pain Management Commission.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Rohrs