



February 6, 2024

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Emerson Hamlin, Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: Support for HB 4149

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA is a professional association and labor union representing over 17,000 nurses and healthcare professionals. Our members work in urban and rural hospitals, clinics, school-based health centers, home health, and county health departments across Oregon.

Nurses and clinicians 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 to keep a roof over their heads or food on the table. Medication costs are not only harming patients and their families, but impacting providers as well. Seeing individuals who cannot get the medications they need causes moral injury, because 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 that they may not get care kept her up at night.

Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) significantly impact the cost of prescription drugs. PBMs act as middlemen between drug manufacturers, insurers, and pharmacies. In this role, PBMs continually grow their profits through manufacturer rebates, utilizing spread prices, clawing back funds from pharmacies, and more, all at the expense of consumers. Unfortunately, Oregon currently lacks good oversight of PBMs, so we cannot fully understand their effects on patients and small pharmacies across our state.

ONA is proud to support HB 4149, which will provide increased transparency over PBMs and their business practices. Receiving this data will better position our state to make policies that support access to affordable medication. Additionally, the bill provides critical protections for local pharmacies, helping to ensure that every Oregonian, no matter where they live, can receive lifesaving medication. ONA urges support. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Emerson Hamlin

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ONA is an affiliate of the American Nurses Association, AFT and AFL-CIO