



OREGON SENATE DEMOCRATS

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Senate Democrats Improve Prescription Drug Affordability

SALEM – Yesterday, the Oregon Senate Democrats passed Senate Bill 844, a bill to create an oversight system to improve the affordability of pharmaceuticals.

Senate Bill 844 creates the Prescription Drug Affordability Board within the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS). The Board consists of five members as well as three alternates who all reside in Oregon and have expertise in healthcare economics as well as clinical medicine.

“The high cost of health care impedes Oregonians’ ability to get the care they deserve,” said Senator Deb Patterson (D-Salem). “Pharmaceutical cost increases are a significant component of the high cost of health care. Those costs are expected to rise and are expected to rise faster than other areas of health care spending. The Board created by the passage of Senate Bill 844 will have the critical goal of protecting Oregonians from inappropriate and over-inflated drug pricing. Which will promote health and positive outcomes for individuals and families across Oregon.”

The Prescription Drug Affordability Board can conduct affordability reviews of a prescription drugs. Each year, the board will identify nine drugs and at least one insulin product that inhibit affordability and therefore, access, for health care providers and patients. The Board will report to the Legislature on an annual basis to ensure Oregon law can respond to the Boards’ findings when necessary. The Board will also analyze and consider effective policies taken up by other states and study the market for generic drugs and report the findings to the Legislature.

Senator Patterson has championed multiple bills to help every day Oregonians get the care they need. Senate Bill 844 builds on that work. She has passed multiple bills to improve access to pharmaceuticals and ensure fairness in pharmaceutical prices. Senate Bill 711 passed the Senate on April 21 to address disparities in drug prices based on gender. On April 22, Senator Patterson carried Senate Bill 764 to prevent large pharmaceutical companies from manipulating the market and prevent more affordable generic drugs from entering the market. Earlier this month, she passed Senate Bill 763 to provide a licensure system for pharmaceutical sales representatives and rein in ballooning costs spent on marketing brand name drugs to health care professionals, which drives costs up.

Senate Bill 844 passed 17-11 yesterday in the Senate, and it passed the House of Representatives today on a vote of 36-20. It now goes to the Governor for her signature.

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