

- Chair Prusak and Members of the House Committee on Health Care:

As somebody who spent roughly four decades as a pediatric physician with a specialty in an Allergy and Immunology, I strongly encourage your support for House Bill 2648.

I was opposed to the physician prescription requirement for pseudoephedrine (PSE) products when it was first passed and remain opposed to it now. I think it is telling that Oregon is now the only state in the country with such a barrier between allergy/cold patients and proven, safe and effective medications.

Working at the Bend-based Allergy Asthma and Associates I have seen patients suffer terrible allergies. As someone who has held leadership positions with the Central Oregon Medical Society and my state specialty societies, I know that other physicians have seen similar suffering.

However, current laws force patients who are in the midst of allergy attacks to take the time to visit the doctor's office before they get the medications they need. This delays necessary care and costs patients more in terms of co-pays and prescription costs.

I believe that the initial law was well intentioned and I support smart policies to reduce Methamphetamine abuse. However, the overwhelming amount of meth in the United States is coming from Mexican drug cartels. Furthermore, a 2016 study showed that Oregon's PSE prescription requirement was not a significant factor in meth production decline. (Source: "Impact of State Laws Regulating Pseudoephedrine on Methamphetamine Production and Abuse: A White Paper of the National Association of State Controlled Substance Authorities" <http://nascsa.org/PDF/psedoeephedrineWhitepaper4.18.16.pdf>)

HB 2648 seems to be a good solution to finally allow patient access to some of the most popular brand- name relief medications like Mucinex D, Sudafed, Claritin D, Allegra D, Zyrtec D, and several others while still preventing PSE abuse. It will keep PSE products behind the pharmacy counter and use the National Precursor Log Exchange (NPLEx) that will allow retailers to block the sales of medicines containing PSE when customers go over their legal limit. Now, 37 other states have adopted NPLEx and they have constantly seen declining domestic meth production.

Physicians know that the current Oregon law is preventing people from getting the care they need which is why many of us support HB 2648 and we ask you to do the same.

Dr. David Coutin  
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