



March 25, 2021

Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Hayden and Salinas: and Members of the House Committee on Health Care:

United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) Local 555 strongly supports HB 2648 and encourages this Committee to pass the bill with a “do pass” recommendation.

UFCW Local 555 represents over 25,000 workers and their families throughout Oregon and SW Washington. UFCW works hard to make sure our union members have access to affordable healthcare as staying healthy is critical to the better life our members have earned.

As someone who personally struggles with allergies ranging from dust to mold to grass seed and more, I can attest first hand that Oregon is home to some of the worst conditions for allergy patients in the country. For our members who suffer or who have family members who are suffering with colds or allergies, finding necessary relief is severely restricted by current Oregon law requiring a doctor’s prescription to access common cold and allergy medicines that contain pseudoephedrine (PSE). A severe allergy attack can imperil a shift, as can taking time off to visit a doctor to secure a necessary prescription. Being able to conveniently purchase the cold and allergy medicine they need without having to visit a doctor is critical for working families. It is time that Oregon joins all 49 other states in allowing Oregonians to buy these medicines at their local pharmacies.

The current prescription requirement also drives up health care costs. Unnecessary doctor office visits for PSE medicines hit individual pocketbooks in the form of increased copays and higher premiums and also drive up costs to our health trust. If common drugs like Mucinex D, Sudafed, Claritin D, Allegra D, Zyrtec D are made available without a prescription, real health care savings will be realized.

HB 2648 will remove the doctor’s prescription requirement and will put PSE medicines behind the pharmacy counter where sale of the product can be controlled and tracked through the National Precursor Log Exchange (NPLEx). The 37 states that use the NPLEx system have consistently seen declining domestic meth production. Our member pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are highly skilled and care deeply about the communities that they serve. Their expertise will help ensure that the transition from a prescription requirement to the use of NPLEx takes a safe and responsible approach to restoring consumers’ convenient access to medicines containing PSE.

This is common sense legislation that will improve health outcomes and affordability for our members and for all Oregonians. Please support HB 2648.

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**UNITED FOOD & COMMERCIAL WORKERS LOCAL 555**

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