

My name is Teresa Melville, I'm 40 years old, and I live in Happy Valley. Thank you, Chair Sanchez and members of the committee, for taking the time to read my testimony in support of HB 3045.

I'm sharing my story because finding the correct medications for reaching and maintaining good health is critical. Adding any kind of barrier can lead to relapse.

I have been stable on my medication for a decade. Last year, I lost my job and my health insurance due to the pandemic, and suddenly maintaining my mental health became a significant challenge. In the middle of maneuvering my finances, look for new employment, adapting to quarantine life, and maintaining my health, I had to fight for access to the mental health medication that had kept me stable.

Prior to being laid off, my insurance covered an extended release prescription that enabled me to work full-time and live a full life. Once-daily dosing leaves me unstable and barely functional, as well as physically ill. After I purchased a private policy, not only did my doctor had to fill out new paperwork for me to get a refill on my prescription, but the change in coverage made my medication unaffordable.

My only option was to ask that my doctor modify my medication needs to accommodate the insurer's requirements. The insurer does not cover the extended release medication that had kept me stable for a decade, and my doctor ended up modifying my medication four times because of the insurer's policy.

Due to the insurer's ultimate control of how they qualify prescriptions, my ability to function diminishes by early evening, and my family only gets the real me for two-thirds of the day. My body goes into withdrawal from the medication nightly, and my family and I are struggling to deal with the side effects. Living like this will have a long-term adverse impact on my quality of life and ability to be a functioning member of my household and society. It has already been a hardship on my family, my ability to gain new employment, and relationships.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.