

Madam Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Searcy Craighead & I reside in Multnomah County, in Oregon. I am a member of Kaleidoscope Fighting Lupus here in Portland & have fought hard the past 9 years to manage living with this disease & finding ways to thrive. I have not been able to work the past 9 years due to my diseases & I receive government disability benefits.

Managing my list of medications & their costs which includes life saving steroids, immunosuppressants, and biologics is one of the big challenges & stresses of my daily life. Not only do I have to live with painful and frustrating symptoms & limitations, but I have to consider the cost of each medication and each monthly premium. I have to weigh the hefty financial expense of being sick against my need for these incredibly important medications. Every single dollar I have to pay out of my limited monthly disability income for these medications & prescription premiums is so valuable. I would not be able to afford to eat as well as pay for these medications if I did not have family that have taken me under their wing and helped me in this day to day struggle.

Being able to receive the financial savings that SB439 proposes would make a huge impact on my community. It may not seem like a lot of money to some, but every single dollar saved could be life saving to a patient. It could mean the difference between getting your medication vs. not having it at all. Or it could mean the difference between being able to eat vs. take your medication. Any alleviation to the financial stress and the tremendous cost of being ill would make a profound difference to my fellow man and woman. Every dollar and every cent is valuable and necessary for us and fighting our disease.

Insurance companies have earned money hand over fist for far too long, many times at the patient's expense, both literally & figuratively. I urge you to please consider changing this. Please recognize their, and your, position of privilege in the medical community & take this opportunity to direct the savings where it can make a big difference to an individual's life. The price of medication should not be the deciding factor in whether or not a patient can receive the medication they need to treat their disease.

Thank you for your attention and for this opportunity to share, Chairwoman & members of this committee.