

Submitter: Andy Harris
On Behalf Of: Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: HB4113

Written Testimony Supporting HB 4113

February 28, 2024

To: Oregon Senate Committee on Health Care

From: Andy Harris, MD on behalf of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden and committee members:

I am testifying in support of House Bill 4113. There are not enough generic HIV treatment medications, so most people living with HIV must rely on brandname drugs. For some, the only way they can afford their meds is by using co-pay assistance to reach their annual deductible. When insurance companies don't count co-pay assistance toward consumers' deductibles, even for drugs with no generic equivalent, it puts people living with HIV at risk of not being able to afford their medications. This in turn undercuts public-health efforts to end the HIV epidemic.

HB 4113 only prohibits limits on co-pay assistance when a consumer is using the assistance for a medication that has no generic equivalent, or a medication for which the consumer has demonstrated medical need. The bill does not apply if consumers choose costly brand-name drugs over generic, less costly ones. For many HIV/AIDS patients, co-pay assistance is the only way that they can afford their medication.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon provides support to address basic needs of individuals living with HIV/AIDS through the Day Center, a drop-in center for low-income individuals living with HIV/AIDS, and the Daily Bread Express that provides meal delivery for low-income, home-bound individuals living with HIV/AIDS. These programs have operated since 1990 and 1992 respectively.

Thank you for helping to keep treatment affordable for some of the most vulnerable members of our state.

Andy Harris, MD
EMO Advocacy Team