

Submitter: Joshua Davis

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5028

Subject: Opposition to Proposed License Fee Increases for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians

Dear Oregon Board of Pharmacy,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed increases in licensing fees for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. These fee hikes place an unnecessary financial burden on professionals who are already navigating rising costs, high student loan debt, and increasing workplace demands.

Oregon already has one of the highest income tax burdens in the nation, with a top rate of 9.9%, placing it among the most expensive states for professionals to live and work. Unlike many other states, Oregon also lacks a sales tax, meaning individuals bear a heavier tax burden through income and property taxes. Increasing licensing fees only adds to this financial strain, making it more difficult for pharmacists and technicians to afford to practice in Oregon.

Additionally, Oregon faces significant healthcare challenges, including a lack of rural health resources and pharmacy deserts that leave many communities with limited or no access to essential pharmacy services. Pharmacists play a critical role in these underserved areas, often acting as the most accessible healthcare providers for rural populations. Raising fees without addressing the existing shortages in pharmacy services could exacerbate these issues, making it even harder to attract and retain pharmacy professionals where they are needed most.

Compounding this issue, nearby states such as Idaho and Washington have broader scopes of practice and fewer regulatory barriers for pharmacists, yet their licensing fees remain lower. For example, the application fee for a pharmacist license in Oregon is \$250, compared to \$140 in Idaho. Likewise, pharmacy technician registration fees in Oregon are significantly higher than Idaho's \$35 fee. Increasing fees without expanding practice authority puts Oregon pharmacists at a competitive disadvantage and could drive professionals to states with fewer restrictions and lower financial barriers.

Rather than raising fees, the Board should consider reducing costs by streamlining regulations, similar to the successful efforts undertaken by the Idaho Board of Pharmacy under the leadership of Alex Adams. Idaho simplified and removed

unnecessary regulations, reducing administrative burdens and costs while maintaining patient safety. These reforms ultimately led to lower licensing fees for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians while expanding their ability to provide patient care. Implementing similar measures in Oregon would lower operational costs for the Board while supporting the pharmacy workforce and improving healthcare access for Oregonians.

For instance, Idaho's Board of Pharmacy reduced its regulations from 100 pages to 26 pages, and further down to 18 pages under subsequent leadership. This streamlining attracted national companies like Amazon's PillPack and CVS to Idaho, creating jobs and expanding pharmacy services. Additionally, Idaho became the first state to allow pharmacy technicians to administer vaccines, a move that proved beneficial during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I urge the Board to reconsider these fee increases and focus on policies that support Oregon's pharmacy professionals, particularly in rural and underserved areas, rather than placing additional financial barriers on an already strained workforce.

Sincerely,
Joshua Davis, PharmD, BCPS