

Submitter: Ann Murray
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB707

Chair Meek, Vice Chair McLane and members of the finance/revenue Committee:

My name is Ann Murray and my husband John and I are pharmacists and owners of Murray Drug, a family business serving Morrow, Gilliam, Wheeler and Sherman counties since 1959. From our 3 critical access pharmacies located in Heppner, Condon and Boardman Oregon, we serve over a 3,000 square mile area. We deliver to the towns of Fossil, Lone, Lexington, Arlington, Irrigon and Umatilla that have no pharmacies. There are no pharmacies in Wheeler and Sherman counties.

I am here today to urge you to pass SB 307 to extend the current pharmacy exemption from the State CAT tax. Last week I testified in person in support of HB 3212 to try to protect patient access to pharmacies. Since the last legislative session Oregon has had 60 pharmacies close, both Chain and independent. Last June's OPB article was headlined "Oregon 2nd worse in nation (behind Alaska) for retail pharmacy access. The pharmacies that are left are overwhelmed and understaffed due to below cost reimbursement and PBM abuses. It is not uncommon for lines of 19 plus people at chain stores, or wait times of more than 24 hours for a new prescription. Oregon has a serious pharmacy access problem. Oregonians deserve local access to medication. This is a fundamental necessity for health care. It is a bi-partisan issue that is sweeping across state and federal legislation. When patients can't get their medications you see hospitalizations increase.

The CAT tax from GROSS sales of prescriptions will cause many more pharmacies to close making this problem even worse. Our payment for prescriptions comes from 3rd party PBM's which dictate the payment we receive. We are not able to raise or adjust prices to the consumer as other businesses do to pass on this tax. In fact we are already paying for this tax from the wholesalers that we buy the drugs from as they do pass it on to us. It is shown on our invoices.

Pharmacies are already losing money and closing. If we have to borrow money to pay this tax regardless if we lost money on the prescription or not, it will be another nail in the coffin for

pharmacies.

We very much need to keep the current exemption from this tax and I urge you to support SB 707.

Thank you,

Ann Murray
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