



Caring Ambassadors Program
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**Written Testimony
House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
April 15, 2025**

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice Chair Javadi, Vice Chair Nelson, and committee members,

My name is Lorren Sandt, Executive Director of the Caring Ambassadors Program. The Caring Ambassadors Program is a national nonprofit advocacy organization based in Oregon City, Oregon. Caring Ambassadors has empowered patients to be advocates for their health since 1997. We provide education, support, and advocacy for people living with chronic diseases, focusing on lung cancer and hepatitis C.

The Oregon State Legislature established the Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB) to address the rising costs of medications and provide much-needed relief to patients. While we appreciate these efforts, the limitations imposed by the legislation prevent the PDAB from effectively reducing patient costs or increasing access to medications. The board cannot address the entire drug supply and pricing ecosystem. Representative Nosse, you know how interconnected this system is and that many of the barriers faced by patients stem from the pharmacy benefit manager/health plan structure, formulary placement, prior authorization, step therapy, and premium costs—issues that fall outside the PDAB's scope and that they may inadvertently make worse.

During the March meeting, the Board finalized a list of 27 medications for affordability reviews and is now seeking input from patients and caregivers through an online survey assessing the affordability of these treatments. However, we are deeply concerned about the Board's approach to this process, starting with the April 30th deadline, which allows patients less than a month to complete this important survey. Despite proposed changes by a council of patients, the survey questions remain unclear. Any assessment of treatment value must include substantial input from patients and clinicians, as their perspectives are vital in shaping decisions that affect them. Moreover, the board has not clarified how the collected data will be used in the review or how affordability will be determined, which raises significant concerns about their processes.

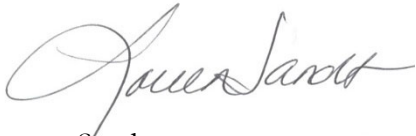
Additionally, we are disappointed that the Board has opted to use *evLYG*, a form of Quality-Adjusted Life Years (QALYs) that Oregon banned in 2024 due to its discriminatory nature. The Health Evidence Review Commission (HERC) no longer employs these measures, so we fail to understand why the PDAB believes it is acceptable to use them.

We all agree that drug costs are high, and while the concept of a PDAB seems reasonable, we must reflect on the fact that such boards have been in operation for several years without producing significant results. It is worth considering whether this is the right time to continue the PDAB or whether it should be paused to assess the implications of CMS negotiations on medication supply chains and patient access.

In today's reality, many Americans are overwhelmed by constant news updates. They are worried about potential cuts to Medicaid, Social Security, or 401(k) plans. They wonder if they can afford a new car or send their kids to college. If the PDAB is not paused, it should be mindful of the mental health of Oregonians during this challenging time and extend the survey period to align with the actual reviews.

Once again, I want to express my sincere gratitude for your time and consideration of this critical matter. Your role in improving healthcare for all Oregonians is crucial, and your dedication to this cause is genuinely commendable.

Sincerely,



Lorren Sandt