

**Date:** 11/19/19

**To:** Insurance Commissioner Andrew Stolfi; Cassie Soucy, Drug Price Transparency Program Coordinator

**From:** Lee Mercer, Business Engagement Committee Chair, Health Care for All Oregon

**Re:** Skyrocketing Prescription Drug Prices

Insurance Commissioner Stolfi and Ms. Soucy,

My name is Lee Mercer and I am a former Board President and member of Health Care for All Oregon. We are a statewide coalition of over 120 member and endorsing organizations working to achieve a comprehensive, equitable, publicly funded, and high-quality health care system to serve all Oregon residents.

As HCAO continues to work towards our mission, we hear from our friends, family, and neighbors regularly about their struggles to afford the life-saving medications they depend on. Rising prescription drug costs are a burden on all Oregonians—not just the patients who depend upon expensive specialty drugs—through rising health insurance premiums, rising costs for Oregon businesses and a growing burden on state and federal budgets. We hear from folks like:

- Lawrence from Manzanita who struggles to pay for his much-needed prostate medication that is now eight times more expensive since he started taking the drug several years ago.
- Bill from La Grande was told his prescription for a topical salve for low cholesterol would cost him \$800 for just one month.
- And Delta in McMinnville who pays about \$900 out of pocket every month for her diabetes, high cholesterol, and antidepressant medications.

Drug companies make double the profits of pharmacists, distributors, insurance companies, and pharmacy benefit managers *combined*. Pharmaceutical executives are lining their pockets while Oregonians are skipping doses, cutting pills in half, or going without their medication all together. The State must take action now to address pharmaceutical price gouging for the health of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Lee Mercer  
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