



Oregon Prescription Drug
Affordability Board

THE QUARTERLY

PDAB sponsored community events across Oregon



The Prescription Drug Affordability Board provided Spanish interpretation at the Woodburn community forum April 15 (above) and American sign language interpretation at the Medford forum April 25 (below)

The Prescription Drug Affordability Board hosted in person and online community forums across Oregon to discuss the high cost of prescription drugs and the effect on Oregonian lives, health, and budgets. The board held events in five cities in April, along with two online meetings in May. Some 156 people attended the sessions held in Portland, Lincoln City, Woodburn, Medford, Bend, and online through Zoom. Board members and staff listened to 28 people describe how they skip medications because they can't afford them, battle insurance companies over prescription coverage, and struggle to find medications that are in short supply.

Lou Savage, coordinator and moderator of the meetings, presented an update to the board at the June 26 meeting. He is the former Oregon Insurance Commissioner. View his discussion about the consumer outreach report at [minute 01:17:57 of the meeting video posted on the PDAB website](#).

Prescription Drug Affordability Board Chairperson Shelley Bailey and Vice Chairperson Amy Burns attended several events and spoke about the board's goal in wanting to hear from consumers. The board chair and vice chair both have pharmacy backgrounds and answered questions and provided resources for consumers throughout the events.



Some highlights of consumer stories included a participant in Woodburn, speaking through an interpreter, about her family's \$560 monthly prescription drug costs for her husband's health conditions. She said she and her husband both work in the fields for low ages and are unable to afford the medications. Additionally, a nurse practitioner in Medford and a health worker in Baker City both

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described patients skipping unaffordable medications, followed by a visit to the emergency room in a health crisis. This situation is dangerous for the patient and costly to the health system, they said. A multiple sclerosis patient from Albany said his \$7,000 monthly medication cost puts a tremendous financial strain on his family. A Medford woman said her brother can't get the diabetes medication that works best for his body due to its high cost.

The stories told at the community forums represent what is happening across the state: medication costs are burdensome for Oregonians. Consumers experience uncertainty about the cost of their prescription drugs and about the ability to access prescriptions. Consumers expressed confusion about how much they will need to pay for their prescription drugs. Consumers also expressed anxiety about the future. **Read the full consumer outreach report on the [PDAB website](#).**

Dan Kennedy, retired pharmacist, appointed to PDAB



Dan Kennedy, RPH, a retired pharmacist, was appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate in June to serve on the Prescription Drug Affordability Board. He attended his first board meeting on June 26. Kennedy was a community pharmacist for 31 years, working as a senior manager at Providence Health Plan Portland and as outpatient pharmacy operations manager at Oregon Health and Science University. He is a graduate of the Oregon State University College of Pharmacy. He is the outgoing president of the Oregon State Pharmacy Association, has been on the board of trustees of the American Pharmacists Association (APA), and served as president of the Academy of Pharmacy Practice and Management within the APA.

“I have a distinct interest in drug policy and affordability specifically because it is well known that the most expensive medications are those that are not taken,” he said. “If a medication is prescribed but it’s too expensive and it’s filled but not picked up by the consumer or patient, that can lead to secondary or tertiary issues. I’m very interested in using my knowledge and experience to help the state of Oregon look at better drug availability and affordability.”

Kennedy lives in the Portland area but grew up in Umatilla and is well acquainted with Eastern Oregon. He has been involved with many state programs throughout his career, including the Health Resources Commission (the predecessor to the Health Evidence Review Commission) the Oregon Pain Management Commission and the PDMP Advisory Committee. Kennedy believes Oregonians deserve access to affordable medications and that people should not have to choose between food, housing or medications. His experience in managing hospital, clinic, and retail pharmacies as well as his past advocacy work will serve PDAB well in broadening perspectives and recommendations to the Legislature. “Drug pricing is a particularly complex, convoluted system,” Kennedy said. “I’m hoping my expertise in pharmacy will help to unravel some of that complexity.”

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– Dan Kennedy, board member

“Prescription Drug Affordability Boards: Taking on the high cost of prescription drugs”

The National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) hosted a webinar on June 15, 2024 called “Prescription Drug Affordability Boards: Taking on the High Cost of Prescription Drugs.” The webinar featured Lila Cummings, Colorado PDAB, Andrew York, Maryland PDAB, Dr. Benjamin Rome, Harvard Medical School, and others. [View the webinar here.](#)

Board votes to pause drug affordability reviews

At the June 26 PDAB meeting, board members voted unanimously to pause the current affordability reviews for 2024. The board will review, assess and possibly improve the criteria and methods used to select potential drugs before beginning affordability reviews again in 2025 with a refreshed data set. The affordability reviews the board conducted so far in 2024 will not move forward.

“I believe in the work of PDAB and I'm committed to completing the board's affordability reviews,” Board Chair Shelley Bailey told members during the June 26 meeting. “This is an incredible amount of work for us, and it requires us to have full confidence in our processes, and ultimately the outcome of our suggestions. This reset will allow us to restart and do some intentional planning over the interim that will set us up for more success next year.”

“While we have made needed process improvements, we are still short of building a systemic approach for our affordability reviews that can be applied consistently to all drugs under review. Restarting the affordability reviews in 2025 will allow us to ensure that our list aligns with the guidelines that we initially sent forth as a board related to the reviews. Postponing these affordability reviews until next year will allow the board to overcome data limitations in both the availability and synthesis, that have hindered some progress.” View board member discussion about affordability reviews at [minute 00:08:46 of the meeting video posted on the PDAB website.](#)

What’s next: July, August board meeting agendas

With the affordability reviews paused, the board agenda and schedule will change this summer. At the July 24 meeting, the board will host seven constituent panels, with a question-and-answer format moderated by Board Chair Shelley Bailey. [Find the agenda on the PDAB website.](#) During the Aug. 21 board meeting, members will review the upper payment limit (UPL) draft report, listen to a presentation about it and have a discussion. The UPL report will include survey results and a summary of constituent concerns and comments discussed during focus groups held in May, June, and July. [Sign up to receive board updates,](#) including meeting agendas and materials.

Senate Bill 192 update: outreach, UPL study

The Prescription Drug Affordability Board is wrapping up six months of outreach to a variety of constituent groups, asking people what they think about the high cost of prescription drugs and what can be done about it. The board asked about upper payment limits (UPL)s and other ways to lower costs for Oregonians. A UPL limits what purchasers in Oregon will pay for specific drugs. The board heard a report about a portion of this outreach effort during the June 26 meeting. (See the story on Page 1).

The Oregon Legislature in 2023 through Senate Bill 192 asked the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to develop a plan for establishing upper payment limits (UPLs) on drugs that are subject to affordability reviews. Since February, the board has been working with consultants to meet with representatives of pharmacies, hospitals, 340B covered entities, insurance companies, pharmacy benefit managers, advocacy organizations, manufacturers, patients, and consumers. The board has hosted 13 of 16 focus groups so far in May, June, and July. Myers and Stauffer LLC, the consultant, also sent out a survey to various groups.

Myers and Stauffer will present the draft report at the Aug. 21 board meeting, with a final report voted on by the board in November. At the June 26 board meeting, Ralph Magrish, PDAB executive director, provided an update on the Senate Bill 192 work so far. View his update before the board [at minute 01:10:47 of the meeting video posted on the PDAB website](#).



Cascade Head trail north of Lincoln City, Oregon, May 2024.

DCBS holds rulemaking about manufacturer fees

The Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) held a hearing on June 25 about annual fees to be paid by drug manufacturers to cover expenses incurred by the Division of Financial Regulation for administering the Drug Price Transparency (DPT) program and Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB) under ORS 646A.680 to 646A.697. DCBS also held a rulemaking advisory committee (RAC) on March 7 with committee members representing manufacturers, pharmacies pharmacy benefit managers and others. [Find the rule text here.](#)

PDAB invites you to attend monthly meetings

The Prescription Drug Affordability Board invites you to attend the monthly meetings held on Zoom at 9:30 am on Wednesdays. Register for the meetings on the [PDAB website](#) or click on table below. If you would like to speak to the board during the public comment portion of the meeting, submit a [public comment form](#) located on the website. American Sign Language interpretation is provided during the board meetings. The board sends out an agenda two weeks before the meeting and provides meeting materials one week before the meeting. They are [posted](#) on the PDAB website. [Sign up to receive agendas and meeting materials.](#) For questions, email pdab@dcbs.oregon.gov or call 971-374-3724.

2024 Calendar: click on dates or times to register

Wednesday, July 24	9:30 a.m.
Wednesday, Aug. 21	9:30 a.m.
Wednesday, Sept. 18	9:30 a.m.
Wednesday, Oct. 16	9:30 a.m.
Wednesday, Nov. 20	9:30 a.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 18	9:30 a.m.