



From the Office of Representative Emerson Levy

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Rep. Levy Introduces Legislation to Lower Prescription Drug Costs

SALEM, Ore. — This week, **Rep. Emerson Levy (D-Central Oregon)** told legislators on the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care that it's time to create co-pay fairness, which means if an Oregonian has insurance and receives financial assistance from a pharmaceutical manufacturer, that payment has to count towards their deductible.

“Legislation I bring before you today is the first step to bring balance to a system that has left patients unable to pay for expensive medication and therefore reliant on costlier emergency room care,” said Levy. “Oregonians that pay for their insurance should be able to use it, but because of co-pay limiter programs, each visit to the pharmacy counter can be a game of healthcare roulette.”

In Oregon, some patients have to either pay out of pocket for prescription drugs or stop taking them altogether because, under some commercial insurance plans, insurance companies aren't required to accept financial assistance toward an enrollee's annual deductible. Discontinuation of medication can lead to irreversible or life-threatening health consequences for chronic disease patients.

Levy's legislation, [HB 4113](#) requires insurers to accept coupons or other third-party payment methods towards the enrollee's annual deductible to pay for life-saving medicines. During the hearing today, legislators heard from people impacted by the high cost of prescription drugs.

“There are not enough generic HIV treatment medications, so most people living with HIV rely on overpriced brand-name drugs,” said Jonathan Frochtzawajg, Public-Policy Manager for Cascade AIDS Project, the oldest and largest provider of services for people affected by HIV in Oregon. “For some, the only way they can afford their meds is by using co-pay assistance to reach their annual deductible. When insurance companies don't count co-pay assistance toward

consumers' deductibles, even for drugs with no generic equivalent, it puts people living with HIV at risk of falling out of treatment, and undercuts public health efforts to end the HIV epidemic.”

Levy’s legislation has bicameral and bipartisan support, including support from **Rep. Cyrus Javadi (R-Tillamook)** and **Sen. Tim Knopp (R-Bend)**.

"HB 4113 ensures that every dollar counts towards patients' out-of-pocket costs, making prescription drugs more affordable and healthcare more accessible for Oregonians," said Javadi.

If enacted, the legislation would impact the lives of Oregonians facing already high healthcare costs. This bipartisan legislation is already in effect in 19 other states in the U.S. and Missouri’s legislature is considering the same measure this year.

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