

The Oregonian

Readers respond: New law curbs pharmacy middlemen

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An estimated [87% of likely Oregon voters](#) say that regulating health insurance companies and their affiliated pharmacy benefit managers – the middlemen that play a key role in determining how patients get their drugs – should be a top priority for the state legislature.

Thankfully, Oregon legislators are heeding that call. [House Bill 4012](#), which prohibits insurers and PBMs' use of so-called "[white bagging](#)" mandates for physician-administered cancer treatments, was recently passed by Oregon lawmakers and signed by Gov. Tina Kotek.

White bagging policies are harmful to patients, requiring physicians to order drugs from a specialty pharmacy often wholly owned or affiliated with the patients' insurer or PBM, thereby dangerously delaying patient access to specialized cancer drugs. The delay from white bagging policies allows time for the patients' disease to progress. It also increases costs and introduces safety risks, as oncologists can't ensure that sensitive medications have been prepared, handled and stored properly.

I thank Oregon lawmakers led by Rep. Rob Nosse (D-Portland), and Kotek, for rejecting this one-size-fits-all model. This action will ensure that physicians and their patients are guiding decision-making, rather than profit-driven mandates imposed by health insurance companies and their PBMs.

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