Governor signs drug price transparency bill

By PARIS ACHEN Capital Bureau

Gov. Kate Brown has signed into law a bill that requires pharmaceutical manufacturers to publicly disclose reasons for steep increases in drug prices.

Several other states, including California, have taken similar measures as the prices of drugs have skyrocketed without an apparent reason.

House Bill 4005 won bipartisan sponsorship and overwhelming support in both the state House and Senate.

"Every Oregonian should be able to access the medications and treatments that allow them to live healthy, productive lives," Brown said in a statement Tuesday. "This bill brings greater transparency around drug pricing, an important step towards making lifesaving and essential drugs more available and affordable."

When the price of a prescription drug increases greater than 10 percent, the bill requires the manufacturer to report the reasons to the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services, including information related to the cost of production, advertising, marketing and research. The manufacturer also must disclose their profits from the drug and whether generic alternatives are available. Manufacturers face civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per day for noncompliance.

The deadline for the first report is July 1, 2019.

Under the new law, the consumer services department is required to publicly post a list of the drugs that have had high price increases, hold annual public meetings about prescription drug prices and make recommendations to the state Legislature for additional measures to curb drug prices.

Insurance companies also are required to report the 25 most expensive prescription drugs in their plans, which ones have increased the most and how those costs affect premiums.

With federal inaction on drug prices, several other states have enacted laws to monitor drug prices and enhance transparency around pricing. Among them are California, Maryland, Nevada, New York and Vermont, according to a report by the Washington Post.

About a dozen other state legislatures are considering or debating variations of drug transparency measures, according to the website Policy and Medicine.

Between 2013 and 2015, national spending on prescription drugs increased by about 20 percent and accounted for an estimated 17 percent of health care spending, according to researched published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Unlike most industrial countries, the United States does not negotiate the price of prescription drugs with manufacturers. As a result, Americans pay more for most drugs.

"Too many people in our community are making hard choices between paying for medications or food and rent,' said Vida resident Nancy Plemons, a patient who testified in support of the Oregon bill. "Patients like me appreciate the support of Gov. Brown and lawmakers from both sides of the aisle who worked so hard to get this bill passed for Oregonians who are grappling with the ever-increasing price of prescription drugs.

The bill was sponsored by state Rep. Rob Nosse, D-Portland, Rep. Ron Noble, R-Mc-Minnville, Sen. Dennis Linthicum, R-Klamath Falls, and Sen. Lee Beyer, D-Springfield.

Endowment: 'We just want to help'

Terri

Ilwaco: 'There's no silver bullet here'

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Endowment funds investments used by universities, nonprofits, churches, hospitals and other groups to support operations. Groups commonly spend the interest earned from the investments, leaving the capital in perpetuity.

CMH Auxiliary, a service group formed more than 60 years ago to support the hospital, donated a \$500,000 life insurance policy to start the endowment campaign. The policy will be written to a younger physician at the hospital, and the auxiliary group will pay the premiums.

The auxiliary group has also promised to contribute \$500,000 in \$50,000 annual payments once the foundation raises \$4 million from other donors.

Terri Gibson, head of the auxiliary group, said it is hoping to sup-

bring more awareness about

what the auxiliary does.

"It's the future of our health care," Gibson said of the endowment.

> "The more money you have in the endowment, the more you can fund the future," Cowden said.

Auxiliary volunteers staff lobbies at the hospital to direct

baby baskets, blanket warm-

ers, specialty chairs, children's activity bags, exercise equipment, cough pillows for surgery patients and scholarships for Clatsop Community College nursing students.

Between 2008 to 2015, the auxiliary bought more than \$100,000 in specialty equipment for the hospital. In 2015, the group donated \$25,000 to the capital campaign for the Knight Cancer Collaborative.

tude," Gibson said. "We just want to help."

for building an enclosed decon-

struction facility, \$250,000 to

replace the port's stormwater

system and \$100,000 for pav-

ing and regrading work that

will help protect water quality.

ager Guy Glenn Jr., the port

is in talks with a private part-

ner, West Coast Vessel Recy-

cling, LLC. The state Depart-

ment of Ecology, Washington

Public Ports Association and

According to Port Man-

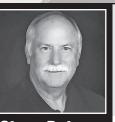




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will take care of it for you.

Gibson visitors to their friends and family and run a 'We have a servant attiport the hospital's mission and gift shop. The group provides

Continued from Page 1A

The New Pacific Hardwoods mill in Raymond's Port of Willapa Harbor closed in 2017. Now, the state plans to invest \$1.5 million to retrofit and reopen the alder sawmill. During the first phase of the project, the state will provide \$553,000 to help with startup costs, \$500,000 for a new small log system and \$345,000 to debt-secure the mill.

In the second phase, the state will provide a \$100,000 grant to help port officials and the Evergreen State College Center for Sustainable Infrastructure research the possibility of starting an energy innovation district.

"Essentially, an energy innovation district allows companies to reduce energy costs and energy waste by sharing energy," Department of Natural Resources spokesman Carlo Davis explained. The facilities can also help companies find ways to use one another's waste streams to create new products.

"Clustering related industry together makes this sharing possible," he said.

The Department of Natural Resources estimates the mill, which is slated to open in 2019, could make about \$9.5 million in log purchases annually. It would create about 49 jobs and around \$2.1 million in wages and generate \$98,000 in taxes annually, according to state estimates.

'Ghost shrimp'

An estimated 25 percent of all U.S. oysters are grown in the region, making the shellfish industry a critical part of the local economy. However, the continued proliferation of burrowing shrimp — often called "ghost shrimp" — is rapidly turning prime oyster-growing land into a muddy wasteland. The shrimp soften the ground, making it impossible for oysters to grow.

The Washington Department of Ecology has been considering whether to let oyster growers spray the shrimp with pesticide, but have been widely expected to decline to issue a permit. The prospect this could begin putting Willapa oyster operations out of business set off a behind-the-scenes scramble at the just-concluded legislative session to find viable

alternatives to spraying. Shellfish growers researchers have already tried dozens of strategies for checking shrimp populations with

little success. Starting this year, the \$1 million investment will pay for research on new shrimp-control techniques. It will also help the Department of Natural Resources, which manages a significant amount of acreage in Willapa Bay, identify unused tidelands that could be made available to affected oyster farmers.

Most of the money — \$950,000 — comes from the state Legislature's supplemental budget. The Department of Natural Resources is contributing \$65,000 and the Department of Agriculture is chipping in \$50,000. The work will be carried out by state staff and the University of Washington Sea Grant research program with assistance from local oyster growers.

'There's no silver bullet here," Franz said in a press release. "It's a mucky situation but, as the manager of significant tidelands in the area and a landlord for many lessees, we're wading in. We've got to explore all options — there are too many livelihoods at risk and communities on the brink

not to." Ken Wiegardt, president of the Willapa Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association, expressed appreciation for the state's new emphasis on

'The shellfish industry is the largest private employer

in rural Pacific County," Wiegardt said. "Dramatic increases in burrowing shrimp populations threaten the environment and economies in southwest Washington. This new partnership has the potential to benefit the many residents of Grays Harbor and Pacific County whose livelihoods depend on these jobs."

Shipbreaking in Ilwaco

By 2020, the Port of Ilwaco could be home to a new shipbreaking facility that would specialize in dismantling and disposing of derelict vessels. In the recently-approved supplemental budget, the Legislature committed \$950,000 for the derelict vessel facility and other work in the port. The investment includes \$600,000

the Association of Washington Cities' Center for Quality Communities would also be involved in the project.

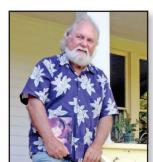
According to the Department of Natural Resources, there are around 150 vessels in the state that are candidates for recycling. The facility would create an estimated 15 jobs.

Franz said the state has a "tremendous" problem with derelict boats. The new facility, she said, would be an example of "taking a challenge and turning it into an opportunity" that would benefit the local economy and the environment.

March 29th

Acclaimed Nature Writer Dr. Robert Pyle

A Columbia Forum Presentation



One of the Pacific Northwest's most acclaimed nature writers, Dr. Robert Michael Pyle of Grays River, Washington, is a lighthearted, insightful and amusing speaker on topics ranging from Bigfoot to butterflies. He literally wrote the book on both topics, and is the author of "The Butterflies of Cascadia," the comprehensive field guide to all the species of Oregon and Washington.

A graduate of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, Pyle's 1987 book, "Wintergreen" won the John Burroughs Medal for its insights about how industrial forestry damaged the land, waters and people of the Willapa Hills of Southwest Washington. He and his Wahkiakum County neighbor Krist Novoselic, co-founder of the legendary rock group Nirvana, are currently collaborating on a mélange of acoustic guitar music and poetry.

TO ATTEND:

For Members: Dinner & Lecture: \$25 each; Lecture only: no charge For Non-Members: Dinner & Lecture: \$35 each; Lecture only: \$15 ea. Appetizers will be available at 6 p.m. • Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. The speaker will begin after the dinner service is complete and non-dinner members and guests of the audience take their seats. Forum to be held at the CMH Community Center at 2021 Exchange St., Astoria.

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