

May 24, 2017

The Honorable Brad Wenstrup, D.P.M.
United States House of Representatives
2419 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Ruiz, M.D.
United States House of Representatives
1319 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen Wenstrup and Ruiz:

We, the undersigned, write collectively to express our gratitude to you for your leadership and foresight in the introduction of H.R. 2077, the Restoring the Patient's Voice Act of 2017. This important legislation will provide a clear and transparent process to seek exceptions and approvals for medications subject to step therapy review by health insurance plans, and also establish a reasonable and clear timeframe for override decisions.

As advocates for the patient and health care provider communities across the nation, and the millions of individuals we collectively represent, we offer you our strong support for H.R. 2077. We believe this common sense, bipartisan solution will garner a positive impact on many individuals who struggle needlessly to manage their disease state and overall health.

The step therapy process employed by many health plans can be a detriment to patients' health, at times delaying access to proper treatment. Step therapy may not only cause significant health risks by increasing the time a patient waits for treatment, but also undermines the patient's relationship with his/her own doctor who is in the best position to know their patient's medical history and assess a treatment plan when prescribing medications.

Your bill recognizes that before a health plan can deny outright or delay a patient's ability to access a medically-necessary treatment - specifically with prescribed medications - that federal health plans and private employers' health plans *should* consider the patient's medical history; respect the health care provider's professional judgment; and take into account the provider's expertise in partnership with their own patient.

As clinicians and legislators, you can attest that the physician-patient relationship is paramount and must be protected. The course of care prescribed by a physician, or other healthcare provider, is at the foundation of patient-centered care, and shared decision-making follows only after the patient and provider establish a relationship founded on trust. When health care plans seek to interfere with that decision-making and change the course of treatment, it jeopardizes a patient's well-being, regardless of the disease state or medical concerns being treated.

On behalf of our respective networks and memberships of patients, physicians, and other health care providers, we kindly request that you consider the undersigned groups a resource, and please call on us as a collective voice on behalf of patients nationwide in support of H.R. 2077. Under your leadership, we look forward to the challenges yet ahead to broaden step therapy protections for our fellow citizens.

Sincerely,

Academy of Integrative Pain Management
The AIDS Institute
Alliance for the Adoption of Innovations in Medicine (Aimed Alliance)
Alliance for Patient Access

Allergy & Asthma Network
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association
American College of Rheumatology
Arthritis Foundation
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
Creaky Joints
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation
Epilepsy Foundation
The Florida Society of Clinical Oncology (FLASCO)
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Hemophilia Federation of America
Hepatitis Foundation International
ICAN, International Cancer Advocacy Network
International Foundation for Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis (IFAA)
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Mended Hearts and Mended Little Hearts
Miles for Migraine
National Eczema Association
National Headache Foundation
National Infusion Center Association
National Psoriasis Foundation
RetireSafe
U.S. Pain Foundation