

Robert A. DeLeo
Speaker of the House of Representatives
State House – Room 356
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Ronald Mariano
House Majority Leader
State House – Room 343
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Aaron Michlewitz
Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means
State House – Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Representative John J. Mahoney
Chairman, Joint Committee on Public Health
State House – Room 130
Boston, MA 02133

Jeffrey N. Roy
Chairman, Joint Committee on Higher Education
State House – Room 43
Boston, MA 02133

Speaker DeLeo, Leader Mariano, Chairman Michlewitz, Chairman Mahoney and Chairman Roy:

On behalf of patients across the Commonwealth, we wish to commend the House for your work over the years to ensure access to groundbreaking treatments that help improve the quality of life for those suffering from illness and disease. As you look to wrap up an unprecedented legislative session, we respectfully request that you bring to the floor and vote to approve legislation dealing with “step therapy” insurance practices. Step therapy is a tool insurers use to limit how much they spend covering patients’ medications. Under a step therapy protocol, a patient must try one or more drugs chosen by their insurer—usually based on financial, not medical, considerations—before coverage is granted for the drug prescribed by the patient’s health care provider.

We are not asking you to prohibit the use of step therapy, rather, we seek a policy to balance protecting patients when a step therapy protocol would produce an adverse health outcome, with allowing for the use of step therapy when it is appropriate for controlling costs.

Under step therapy protocols, patients may be required to try one or more alternative prescription drugs that are of lower cost to the insurer but may not be the best therapy for some patients. Patients need the ability to quickly assess their condition with their doctors and find the best course of treatment for their individual medical needs. Delays in access to the best treatment available, which could be experienced as a result of patients having to go through a step therapy protocol, can pose significant risk to the treatment of disease.

Step therapy can undermine physicians’ ability to effectively treat patients, can lower quality of care, and lead to setbacks and disease progression for patients. Exemptions from step therapy do not prohibit insurers from using step therapy but seek to balance cost containment with patient needs.

We appreciate your consideration and are available to discuss any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Aimed Alliance
Alliance for Patient Access
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Gastroenterology
American College of Rheumatology
American Diabetes Association
Arthritis Foundation
Chronic Disease Coalition
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation
Epilepsy Foundation New England
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Infusion Access Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Lupus Foundation New England
Massachusetts Association for Mental Health
Massachusetts Gastroenterology Association
Massachusetts Pain Initiative
Massachusetts Society of Clinical Oncologists
National Alliance on Mental Illness of Massachusetts
National Infusion Center Association
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization for Rare Disorders
National Psoriasis Foundation
New England Bleeding Disorders Advocacy Coalition
New England Hemophilia Association
Patients Rising Now
Susan G. Komen
US COPD Coalition
U.S. Pain Foundation
ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer