



Ohio Association of Rheumatology

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Honorable Representative Stephen A. Huffman
Chair, House Health Committee
1 Capitol Square, Room 121
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: WRITTEN TESTIMONY - Support of H.B. 72 (Johnson & Antonio) – Step Therapy Protocols.

Dear Chairman Huffman and Members of the House Health Committee,

On behalf of the Ohio Association of Rheumatology (OAR), I am writing to raise an important issue with you that impact's a patient's ability to access appropriate treatment options.

Step therapy, also known as “fail-first,” is a mechanism insurers use that requires patients to use one or more drugs chosen by the insurer before coverage is granted for the treatment prescribed by a physician.

Step therapy was created to limit how much insurers spend covering patients' medications, but it has evolved into a one-size-fits-all policy. For many physicians and patients it has become a significant barrier to getting the right care at the right time.

H.B. 72 does not prohibit insurers from using step therapy but seeks to balance cost containment with patient needs. H.B. 72 protects patients by:

- *Ensures that step therapy programs are based on clinical guidelines developed by independent experts;*
- *Ensures that the exceptions process for step therapy is transparent and accessible to patients and health care providers; and*
- *Establishes a basic framework for when it is medically appropriate to exempt patients from step therapy.*

For these reasons, the Ohio Association of Rheumatology requests that the House Health Committee favorably support the passage of House Bill 72. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Ott, MD
President
Ohio Association of Rheumatology