



Mended Hearts™

National Office

The Mended Hearts, Inc.  
8150 N. Central Expressway, M2248  
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(888) HEART99 (888-432-7899)  
www.mendedhearts.org

Inspiring hope and improving the quality of life

for heart patients and their families

through ongoing peer-to-peer support.

April 6, 2018

The Honorable Huffman  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 S. High St.  
Columbus, OH 43215

**Re: HB72 – Improves step therapy**

Dear Chairman Huffman and the House Health Committee

On behalf of Mended Hearts, a member of the 60-member coalition representing thousands of providers and patients throughout Ohio, **we urge you to support House Bill 72.**

The bipartisan legislation, sponsored by Representatives Terry Johnson and Nickie Antonio, will provide patients timely access to the medications they need. Members of our coalition have testified at bill hearings, advocacy days, and individual meetings with legislators over the past two years on the adverse impact that step therapy/fail first requirements have caused our patients.

**HB72** improves step therapy protocols, a one-size-fits-all utilization management tool used by health insurance plans, which require patients to try and fail one or more prescription drugs before coverage is provided for the medication chosen by the patient's health care provider.

We understand the need to contain health care costs, but we are concerned because this "step therapy" approach is dangerous and puts lives at risk. Step therapy algorithm requirements do not consider the physician's clinical judgement as well as the patient's personal medical history.

**HB72** does **not** prohibit insurers from using step therapy and it does **not** require insurers to cover any specific medication. It seeks to improve the step therapy process by balancing cost containment with common sense patient needs.

**HB72** would ensure that step therapy decisions are based on clinical practice guidelines or medical or scientific evidence. It would require insurers to have a clear, convenient process for physicians to pursue a step therapy exemption. The bill also specifies the conditions under which it is medically appropriate to exempt patients from step therapy.

Excluding physicians' clinical judgment from patients' treatment plans creates a barrier to getting the right care at the right time. Step therapy can undermine physicians' ability to



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effectively treat patients and lower quality of care, resulting in set-backs and disease progression for patients.

Mended Hearts is a national nonprofit that serves patients and families who are impacted by cardiovascular disease. Our organization is in over 300 communities, serving 460 hospitals across the nation. Our mission is to inspire hope and improve the lives of patients through peer-to-peer support, education, and advocacy. Our cardiovascular patients struggle to obtain their prescribed medications and rely on their elected leaders to help assure that the patient voice is considered in all health care discussions.

**Ohioans cannot wait any longer to have the patient protections in HB72 and we respectfully urge you to prioritize the passage of this legislation.** Ohio would join the growing list of 16 states that have enacted similar step therapy legislation, including Indiana, West Virginia, Iowa, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Texas.

Thank you in advance for supporting patients throughout Ohio.

Sincerely,

Andrea Baer  
Director of Patient Advocacy  
Mended Hearts/Mended *Little Hearts*

Norm Linsky  
Executive Director  
Mended Hearts/Mended *Little Hearts*