



Ohio Association of Rheumatology

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April 5, 2018

Honorable State Representative Stephen A. Huffman
Chairman
House Health Committee
77 S. High St.
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Support of HB 72 (Johnson & Antonio) – Step Therapy Protocols.

Dear Chairman Huffman & House Health Committee Members:

The Ohio Association of Rheumatology is a non-profit organization composed of rheumatologists dedicated to the advancement of quality arthritis and musculoskeletal health care for all persons in the State of Ohio.

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.

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

- (1) Ensuring that step therapy decisions are based on clinical practice guidelines or medical or scientific evidence.*
- (2) Requiring insurers to have a clear, convenient process for physicians to pursue a step therapy exemption.*
- (3) Specifying the conditions under which it is medically appropriate to exempt patients from step therapy.*

Step therapy can undermine a physicians' ability to effectively treat patients and lower quality of care, resulting in set-backs and disease progression for patients.

For these reasons, the Ohio Association of Rheumatology requests that you favorably vote in support of HB 72. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Stephanie Ott

Stephanie Ott, MD
President, Ohio Association of Rheumatology

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