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for a healthier Ohio*



**Written Testimony by Timothy Chang, MD
on behalf of the
Ohio Dermatological Association & Ohio State Medical Association
to the Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid
in Support of SB 56
Tuesday, March 7, 2017**

My name is Dr. Timothy Chang and I am a board-certified dermatologist at MetroHealth in Cleveland and Clinical Assistant Professor at Case Western Reserve, School of Medicine. I am writing on behalf of the Ohio Dermatological Association and the Ohio State Medical Association in support of SB 56.

Today's discussion on SB 56 is a critical step to ensure patients have access to their prescription medicines. Step therapy protocols have prevented dermatologists from prescribing drugs they know will provide the best treatment results in the most expeditious manner. Requiring patients to try and fail treatments jeopardizes the health of patients who may have an adverse reaction, potentially resulting in dangerous consequences, after taking an inappropriate drug.

SB 56 would preserve a provider's right to make treatment decisions in the best interest of the patient. Physicians know their patients' medical history, which enables them to identify potential contraindications and life-threatening adverse reactions. Retaining physicians' medical judgment in patients' treatment plans is a cost-effective way to prevent health care dollars from being used on medications that are not effective. It also prevents patients from a prolonged treatment that includes scheduling multiple visits to their physician and spending money on prescription medications that are not effective.

Every day, I see how step therapy impacts the ability of my patients to obtain medications that may help them. Knowing their complete medical history, I select medications that have the best chance of treating their skin condition. Unfortunately, my patients are forced to use medications that have been identified by the health plans rather than me. For example, recently I saw a patient with debilitating psoriasis affecting her hands. Due to swelling, pain and discomfort in her hands, she had difficulty performing basic activities of daily living. Recently, there have been several new effective treatments

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developed for this condition. However, due to step therapy requirements instituted by her insurance, I had to place my patient on an older medication with significantly more side effects. The medication required frequent office visits that were both inconvenient and costly for my patient, as she was subjected to co-pays at each visit and had to get frequent blood tests while on the medication. Only after several months of treatment were we able to get one of newer, more effective medications approved. Thankfully, she is doing well now, but this is just one example of where step therapy is a hindrance for physicians and patients.

The medical and patient communities need the support of this committee and the entire Ohio Legislature to ensure patients have access to appropriate medications at the right time.

On behalf of the Ohio Dermatological Association and Ohio State Medical Association, I urge you to pass SB 56.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.