



May 22, 2018

The Honorable Senator Burke
Chair, Committee on Health, Human Services and Medicaid
Statehouse, Room 201
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: SB56 – Improves step therapy

Dear Chair Burke:

On behalf of American Lung Association in Ohio, a member of the 60-member coalition representing thousands of providers and patients throughout Ohio, **we urge you to support Senate Bill 56.**

The American Lung Association is the oldest voluntary public health organization in the United States, representing 33 million Americans with lung disease. For patients with lung disease, including asthma, COPD and lung cancer, having access to the proper medications is essential.

The bipartisan legislation, sponsored by Senators Peggy Lehner-R and Charleta Tavares-D, 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.

SB56 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 step therapy algorithm requirements do not take into account the physician's clinical judgement as well as the patient's personal medical history.

SB56 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.

SB56 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 effectively treat patients and lower quality of care, resulting in set-backs and disease progression for patients.

Ohioans cannot wait any longer to have the patient protections in SB56 and we respectfully urge you to prioritize the passage of this legislation. Ohio would join the growing list of 17 states that have enacted similar step therapy legislation, including Indiana, West Virginia, Iowa, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Texas, and Minnesota.

Thank you in advance for supporting patients throughout Ohio.

Respectfully,



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