



Ohio Association of Rheumatology

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May 21, 2018

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

**Re: Support of SB 56 (Lehner and Tavares) – Step Therapy Protocols.**

Dear Chairman Burke:

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.

**SB 56 does not prohibit insurers from using step therapy but seeks to balance cost containment with patient needs. SB 56 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.*

Excluding physicians' clinical judgment from patients' treatment plans creates a barrier to getting the right care at the right time. 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 SB 56. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

*Stephanie Ott*

Stephanie Ott, MD  
President, Ohio Association of Rheumatology

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