**The Honorable Senator Burke** May 21, 2018Chair, Committee on Health, Human Services and MedicaidStatehouse, Room 201Columbus, OH 43215

**Re: U.S. Pain Foundation Urges Support for Senate Bill 56**

Dear Chair Burke,

On behalf of U.S. Pain Foundation, the nation’s leading patient advocacy organization and a member of the 60-member coalition representing thousands of providers and patients throughout Ohio, we urge you to support Senate Bill 56 and provide patients timely access to the medications they need.

Senate Bill 56 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 originally 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 consider the physician’s clinical judgement as well as the patient’s personal medical history. Senate Bill 56 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.

 This proposed legislation 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.

Children and adults living with chronic pain can go for months or even years before being diagnosed. Once a diagnosis has been determined, the individual then goes through a trial and error process to find the therapy regimen that may work in managing their disease and related symptoms. The patient and doctor work collaboratively to determine which treatment option is best for that individual; insurers should not be interfering with the doctor-patient relationship and should honor the decisions and therapy options that will prove most beneficial for the person living with the chronic disease.

Ohioans cannot wait any longer to have the patient protections in Senate Bill 56 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.
Respectfully,

Shaina Smith
Director of State Advocacy & Alliance Development